

BREAKING A BIRD DOG

HORACE LYTLE



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BREAKING A BIRD DOG



THE AUTHOR AND SMADA BYRD

Though a little ragged here from so much work, this bitch, as that well-known authority, A. F. Hochwalt, has said, "Would be hard to beat, even on the bench, before a practical judge." Mr. Lytle, however, believes that too many owners of the Irishmen have been swept away by their show possibilities. What we need to-day is Irish dogs that can and will work in the field—and here is a sample of a real one that does

BREAKING A BIRD DOG

A TREATISE ON TRAINING

BY

John HORACE LYTLE



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TO THE MEMORY

of the old Dayton Pointer Club—and to all those, whether within its membership or without, who helped to bring distinguished honor to the Gem City of Ohio and make it, as it was, in the “good old days,” a mecca for the best that could be found anywhere in bird dogs, and representative of the highest possible ideals for the betterment of these noble creatures as well as conducive to ennobling influences—this little book is appreciatively dedicated by the author who has drawn much inspiration from these splendid examples of the past.

H. L.

TO A DOG

The curate thinks you have no soul;
 But you,
Dear friend, whose solemn self-control,
 In our four-square familiar pew,
Was pattern to my youth—whose bark
 Called me in Summer dawns to rove—
Have you gone down into the dark
 Where none is welcome—none may love?
I will not think those good brown eyes
 Have spent their light of truth so soon;
But in some canine paradise
 Your wraith, I know, rebukes the moon,
And quarters every plain and hill,
 Seeking his master . . . As for me,
This prayer at least the gods fulfill:
 That when I pass the flood and see
Old Charon by the Stygian coast
 Take toll of all the shades who land,
Your little, faithful barking ghost
 May leap to lick my phantom hand.

—*St. John Lucas*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

IT would not be seemly to permit these pages to be published without making grateful and public acknowledgment of the helpful suggestions, advice, criticisms and encouragement that have been received from certain well-known authorities for whose opinions I have the utmost respect in any matter pertaining to dogs. Foremost among these are Nicholas Daniel, Harvey J. King, A. F. Hochwalt and Ray Vance, all of Dayton, Ohio; Mr. G. H. Macdougall, of Spokane, Washington; and Mr. R. J. McCullagh, of Newton Falls, Ohio. To one and all of these men I take this means of attempting to express, at least in some slight measure, the appreciation that I so deeply feel.

PREFACE

NO book which deals with bird dogs, and the methods of training and developing them, will ever meet unqualified approval in all quarters. But I do believe that my book has sufficient merit to make it worthy of publication. It has been read and approved by enough persons whose experience and judgment I trust to give me confidence in its fundamentals; and the hundreds of letters which have flowed in to me during the past year from those who have read and claim to have enjoyed it would seem to indicate that it has filled its place fairly well in the hearts of those who love good bird dogs in the way they deserve to be loved. But over and beyond all this—even above the kindly comment of such unquestioned authorities as Al Hochwalt and Nick Daniel—is the fact of Smada Byrd's own record which speaks for itself. I may never start her again in a Field Trial, but she has started once and made a

name for herself by her splendid performance. This was on March 8, 1924, in the trials of The Miami Valley Amateur Field Trial Association, when she was placed over several winners in important open trials, and won for me two trophies which I shall always prize most highly. Several of the dogs against which she competed were old campaigners, yet the work of my red setter was so decisive that she could not be overlooked. The only comment of the judges was that she "handled almost too well for field trial standards of judgment." I feel that there could not be a higher tribute written for my methods of training than my Irish Setter wrote herself into the records of bird dogs by her performance on that day, for no one else has ever had a hand in her training and the only basis upon which her development has been founded will be found outlined in the following pages. If actions do speak louder than words, then Smada Byrd herself has spoken all that need be said about the soundness of my system.

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INTRODUCTION

I AM beginning to believe that the success or failure of this book must somehow depend upon this *Introduction*. Certainly that is true if labor is any basis for judgment. This is, I think, the tenth time I have written the *Introduction*—and as I type these lines I am not sure yet that I am saying just what I want to say in exactly the way I want to say it.

I started out by writing my *Introduction* first. Then after almost each new chapter I would go back and rewrite this infernal *Introduction*—and here I am at it again, after the balance of the book is all finished and nearly ready for the press.

Yet all this effort is not because I think the *Introduction* is so important in itself—but because I believe it is of utmost importance that I get on the proper basis with my readers right at the start and have you understand just what I am striving for and hoping to accomplish in the following pages. If you

do not expect too much you are less apt to be disappointed.

This book is not intended as the last word in training—but it does tell the story pretty thoroughly of how I broke my Irish setter, Smada Byrd, and points the way, I hope, for others to follow, basing their methods upon individual requirements as they develop and under general theories which I advance and believe are fundamentally sound. I am a great advocate of *natural* processes.

Thus the subject of breaking a bird dog is approached and handled in this book from a different angle and on a different basis from any similar book on the market. Otherwise it would have no excuse for being written. In that it is not merely a collection of abstract theories—but a running report of actual lessons and gradual progress—this book is undoubtedly unique among works of its kind. In reality it is merely a bird dog biography, with the story confined to the period of Smada Byrd's training and early development. Yet long practice has proved that the theories are fundamentally sound, and that they lose nothing from the lack of a more technical treatment.

There is sometimes a wide difference between sportsmen who use bird dogs in the field. One man may enjoy dogs; the other loves them. The former may derive sufficient pleasure from dogs that have been broken for him; the latter would never be quite so satisfied as with a dog that he has developed himself from a wee pup to a perfectly finished shooting dog. You may form your own conclusions as to which of the two reaps the richest reward.

If you do not *love* dogs with all your heart and soul—if you do not *believe* in them and trust them fundamentally—if you do not *understand* them and have *faith* and *sympathy* in your soul for the splendid creatures—and if you do not have a *world of patience*—then do not attempt to break a bird dog. You have no right to—and you won't succeed.

But for the fellow who feels the fields calling and whose heart is right—there is no richer joy, no keener pleasure, no more interesting study, no greater fun, no healthier sport than breaking your own bird dog to become your companion and your helper in the field.

THE AUTHOR

BREAKING A BIRD DOG

CHAPTER I

FIRST DAYS IN THE FIELD

ON a certain well-remembered day in February of 1922 the writer came into possession of a little Red Setter which is to become the subject around which the chief messages in this book revolve. She was at that time just past six months old and in her veins flows Irish Setter Blood as pure as can be found anywhere that Bird Dogs are bred. This puppy was registered as Smada Byrd and it wasn't long before she had found her way into all hearts in my home. She was an interesting little thing, full of fun and frolic, and I venture to predict that but seldom has any dog ever merited or achieved more love than we gave her.

But Smada Byrd was not to be an ornament—she was to be a field dog, unless my

plans should miscarry, and that meant that she had her work to do and must learn her lessons in preparation.

Then one day bad news came suddenly to cause us grief—little Byrd had been exposed to distemper and would surely come down with it. There followed the trying siege of bringing her through, the effort ultimately being crowned with success, and she became herself again. It required several months for her to regain her strength and health, the process being helped materially by plenty of fresh air and sunshine. Hours at a time she spent just playing with my little boy, romping in the fields about my home.

Finally, one day—so swiftly does time fly—it came to me almost as a shock that the Illinois quail season was not far off; and I had been invited to join a party there. It was, in fact, well into September and not a thing had been done toward Byrd's training. Less than sixty days remained in which to bring the little dog to a point where she would be of some real service in the field. And still I hesitated to send her away to a trainer. I simply couldn't seem to bring my-

self to it—so surely had the puppy by that time become almost one of the family that we just felt we couldn't spare her. Yet I was exceedingly busy at the office and very much inclined to feel that to send her away was the only solution to the problem.

"Why in thunder don't you break her yourself?" The question was put to me point-blank one day by Harvey King, with the bluntness that sometimes characterizes that splendid sportsman and artist who loves so well to paint real bird dogs in action or in any poses peculiar to the breed.

My first inclination was to say I hadn't time. We are apt to get into the habit these days of thinking we haven't time for things. But Mr. King scoffed at the idea. "When I was a young man," he said, "I wouldn't think of having one of my dogs trained by some one else—never cared a whit for one that I didn't train myself. You *can* train your little setter—why don't you do it? You'll never be half so satisfied with her unless you do. You young fellows these days give me a pain with all your rush and artificiality!"

The taunt in his voice was as a challenge

from other days to the younger generation, and I never yet have let a challenge pass unnoticed. I decided then and there to *take the time* to break the little bitch. Instead of regretting it—I wouldn't have missed it for anything in the world. It reawakened many memories, and, more than that, I found it so much fun that I have ever since been taking most of my recreation with the dogs. I still work Byrd regularly, except during the season when the quail are paired out, and have since trained two of her puppies as well as countless other dogs both for myself and others. But all this is another story—to be taken up at some later time.

I already knew, and also soon located other places, where quail could be found—for although this greatest of all game birds is now in disgrace in Ohio, and has been demoted from his once proud position of peerage to a very tame and undignified rating as a "song bird," still there is, as yet, no restriction against making him fly. I hope that before this book has ceased entirely to sell there will be another story to tell so far as the Buckeye State is concerned in this respect—

and I believe it will be so. My dictionary classifies quail as "a game bird"; but the statesmen of Ohio have decreed that he is but an idle singer of songs. Be that as it may, I broke my bird dog on quail—and they didn't smell like song birds to her.

I shall never quite forget just how I felt returning from the fields with Byrd after that memorable first day of her "training." It seemed as though little or nothing at all had been accomplished. She had not sensed even remotely just what the idea seemed to be. I was the personification of discouragement and despair. I may as well say right here that it was only after a great number of trips afield that I was given the right even to hope for eventually successful results. Of course, I'm putting this pretty strong—but the point is, I want all amateurs who read this book to guard against being too easily discouraged in the early stages. One of the chief reasons for this was that, although of the bluest blood lines, neither Byrd's father nor mother were ever hunted. Thus there was a dead generation behind her which I had to combat. It was a very noticeable contrast to Byrd's own

puppies, all of which have been keen to hunt almost from the day they were whelped. Certain it is that all the little rascals of her first litter were "birdier" at five months than their mother was at fifteen. But again I digress.

To help out in the work I took along a very fine Pointer for which I had formed a great fondness, having hunted over him the season before in Illinois. We had not been out so very long before "Old Ned" made a characteristic and beautiful stand and I decided not to put the check cord on Byrd, but rather let her come up to him and see what, if any, attention she would pay to his pose; and what, if anything, she would do. We were not long in doubt. She went right on past him as if nothing at all were indicated by Ned's statuesque stand. Every which way the birds flew when she flushed them. The sad part of it to me was that she seemed not at all to realize what she had done. In fact, she appeared scarcely to notice the quail at all. That is what cut me to the quick.

And right here now, before we go any further, I want to discuss just this thing.

Some dogs mature more quickly than others. Just as do some people. Perhaps your dog may be one of these slow developers. Be sure of this before allowing yourself to become discouraged too quickly or easily. Else you may live to regret a too impetuous decision that may rob you of what might have become a splendid performer.

After Byrd flushed that first covey I tried to put the check cord on her and lead her up to the singles as Ned found and pointed them one after another. Nothing doing! With the cord attached to her, Byrd simply refused to move, squatting right down in her tracks with her head between her paws—and that's all there was to it. Thus did I arrive at another conclusion in regard to the training of Byrd: she would have to be steadied without the help of the check cord. That only made matters more difficult in the case of one so exceedingly timid as she. But I realize that most of you will be able to use this means of checking and controlling your dog, so will mention that a very good contrivance can be made by getting a plain ring of about one and one quarter inches in di-

ameter at the hardware store and tie this to the end of a stout cord some forty feet long. Loop the cord through this ring to make a noose to slip over the dog's head; and the choke feature of this device will be as severe as you have any right or reason to want. For those who prefer a more fancy store-made device, however, there are a number of very good choke collars on the market which may be ordered through most any bird-dog kennel, sporting goods store or outdoor magazine.

The balance of that first lesson of Byrd's was devoted to working out the singles of the one covey we found and trying to decide just what would be the best way to overcome her seemingly unconscious lack of appreciation of what it should mean to have right there under her very nose the foremost of the game birds, to hunt which she and her ancestors before her had been born and bred. Every time Ned pointed she went heedlessly right on past him. Yet, when we tried to put the check cord on her, she would just quit cold and slink at my heels, doubled up like a limp rag. I soon

saw there was no chance to use the cord as a restraint. The minute she felt it about her neck she ceased to need restraint—she then needed a cord to pull her toward the birds, not to hold her back. The reason for this was that she was naturally timid and had not been accustomed to anything of the kind and felt so humiliated that she simply “laid down” on the job. Although through careful handling and by instilling confidence I have built up in Byrd a sufficient boldness and independence in the field, nevertheless, I realize more fully all the time how easily she might have been ruined forever in those early formative days—for certainly she was naturally the most timid puppy I had ever seen. The fact that she has become to-day the most perfect bird dog I have known in the field, taking her work day in and day out, is irrefutable evidence of what can be done in developing a dog if one will only go at the job in the correct, careful way.

I went home very much discouraged from that first lesson and found it easy to chide myself for having bought an Irish Setter in the beginning, when so many of the follow-

ers of the other breeds had urgently advised against it—arguing that either a Pointer or one of the other Setters would be found more “birdy,” and making all manner of fun of me for my determination to develop an Irishman as a real bird dog.

However, the mere fact that I was confronted with a problem did not cause me to give up the ship. I was just bullheaded enough to determine to keep at it until I conquered the situation. The fact that it was hard was no excuse to give up and prove a quitter. That only made it all the more interesting—and ultimate success all the more worth while. It was simply a question of matching wits with the situation. The result *could* be secured and I was bound that I would solve it. Then it was that I finally reached a decision. This was, that I would “break” Byrd by talking to her, and *reasoning things out* after being sure that I had made her understand without question what was wanted.

I began by making it a point always to talk to her around home in an ordinary tone of voice and in the most matter-of-fact man-

ner. I did not talk to her in the generally accepted doggy style of language. Instead of calling her upstairs at home, for example, by saying: "Here, Byrd," I would say very naturally, and in the same tone of voice as if talking with some friend, something after this fashion: "Byrd, don't you want to come up here with me?—come on up." I practiced this sort of thing whenever I had the time and opportunity. The result was not instantaneous by any means—but I do honestly believe that it increased, and developed, Byrd's ability to understand the English language. It wasn't expected to work miracles; it did help gradually to awaken in my puppy a desire to do what her master wanted.

You know, a dog *wants* to do what you want him to do. He *wants* to do right. Dogs don't deliberately want to do wrong. Those that do not seem to embody this truth in their make-ups have simply got off on the wrong foot first, early in life. And nine chances in ten it was the master's fault. You give a young dog a fair chance right from the beginning and he won't often go

far wrong. Spoil him once, however, and you may never get him right again. Win his confidence early—then never give him cause to have his faith shaken. You will be repaid many times over in the service you will get that otherwise you would not. In handling a dog, the big thing is to realize that *the dog thinks too*. You must try to interpret *what* he is thinking—then half your battle is won. Guess wrong, and you get nowhere—or worse.

I am reminded of a certain fellow who says that his wife never objects to his playing poker because he always splits with her fifty-fifty when he wins. One day he was telling me of having stayed out until 4:00 a.m. playing cards the night before. He said he won one hundred and forty dollars. He told me his wife was awake when he got home, but made no complaint when he announced the result of his efforts. "I gave her a ten-dollar bill," said he, "and she was glad I had gone to the party."

"But I thought you won one hundred and forty dollars," I reminded him.

"I did," said he, "but of course I couldn't

tell her that—it was too much. You see she would at once figure that if I could win that much, I also might lose that much; and that would never do—you know how it is.” And then he added sagely: “You must remember *they think too*, and you’ve got to keep just a little ahead of them an’ watch your step at that.”

I’ve used this story a hundred times since to drive home my point regarding dogs: *they think too*. Try to interpret *what* their angle of thought is and guide your actions with and toward them accordingly, and you will succeed just in proportion to how correctly you read their thoughts. Throughout this book I shall have many occasions to refer to this great truth which I believe governs so definitely whether you will meet with success or failure in handling dogs. The husband and wife poker story always seems to drive the point home pretty successfully and helps to keep it in memory. *They think too*. This secret is the key to success.

No two dogs are alike in temperament, and what may be the right treatment for one

might ruin another. If you can't realize this, and sense the individual situation in each instance, and fit the cure to the case, understanding the essentials yet fully conscious that rules are made but to be broken—then you had better not tackle the job of attempting to break a bird dog. I can only add that if, on the other hand, you do have the patience and the sympathy and the desire to undertake this work with a full appreciation that there is no more interesting study of psychology—then you will find the ultimate reward fully worth the effort.

Right here let me take advantage of the opportunity to advance a certain definite conclusion in regard to teaching a dog to do anything. There is something besides just the dog's confidence which you must secure. If you would the most easily and surely direct his tendencies along the lines of your desires there must exist between you a perfect *companionship*. It is this that will cause your desires to be easily interpreted by the dog, and the desire on his part to follow them will be but the perfectly natural

result. Your aim should be to approach as nearly as you can the state of camaraderie that exists between a boy and his dog—or between dog and master on the frozen trails of the far North, where dogs often rise to such supreme heights in their service. Then you will have the right basis as a foundation for big accomplishment from your efforts.

Years ago, as a boy, I had a big Gordon Setter that I taught to pull me around in a little wagon. He was as perfect in his response to pressure of the reins as any horse behind which I have ever ridden. "Old Frank" was thoroughly broken to drive. I used to go any place with him. Yet I do not recall ever having given him any special set instruction. The *companionship* between us was so supreme that it was simply the most natural thing in the world for him to understand what I desired him to do, and his love made him *want* to do it. Like Topsy, he "just grew" into whatever I wished him to do. He was the first bird dog I ever owned. In his hunting there was no particular direct effort ever put on him, yet dear Old Frank was my first worthwhile dog,

and one of the four really remarkable dogs that I have owned and loved—though I have two unusual puppies coming along now which bid fair to raise the count to six. These puppies are Smada Byrd's King and Byrd's Eileen, a son and a daughter of Smada Byrd. Of course I realize there will also be more as time goes on.

I once had a dog that I thought of showing on the bench, yet I could not seem to get him to pose properly so as to display his points of excellence. He just wouldn't "stand" for me. But one evening I came home to find that my little boy had accomplished what I had failed to do—the dog stood perfectly for him and even seemed delighted to do so. And so I say to you who would break a bird dog—or teach a dog to do anything at all—the closer you can approach the boy type of perfect *companionship* the more natural will the teaching seem and the surer will the results take form.

The second time I took Byrd out for a lesson nothing of particular interest came up. Mrs. Lytle and my boy went along and the only exciting incidents were that on the way



OLD FRANK

The big, upstanding Gordon Setter to the left (splashed with white) is Old Frank, the first bird dog that the author ever owned. Many of you will recall this dog as the hero of Mr. Lytle's story, "Old Frank's Last Point," published as one of several in his book entitled The Story of Jack. Frank was a typical boy's dog, but he would point birds, and in this story his master fascinatingly describes his outstanding characteristics in a manner you are bound to enjoy. The above cut was made from a little old dirty kodak snapshot that had been lost for over thirty years.

out I accidentally ran over and killed both a turkey and a squirrel—and before the training had progressed very far it started to rain so hard that I found myself not at all popular as the result of what had been a well-intentioned invitation to witness a lesson in bird-dog culture. Get this point, however: the day was not wasted in spite of lack of bird work. No day afield is lost when you are breaking a bird dog. The thing that is accomplished may not be noticeable—but some day it will bear fruit quite unexpectedly. Byrd was at least given another chance to see good old Ned at his sturdy, faithful work and it could not help but deep down in the soul of her make an impression and cause her to begin to take the tiniest mite more interest in her work. The difficulty was in getting on game. We had not yet had much luck in finding birds. You know how it is—when you want them most they're the hardest to locate. Still, no small part of the pleasure is in the anticipation, and I knew that a better day would dawn.

Several persons have asked me if I don't

believe in yard breaking a dog before taking him into the field. The answer is that it all depends. If the dog is unruly, you had better do it. Otherwise not. The less you have "monkeyed" with a young dog the more independently he will hunt when first taken afield—and that, of course, is one of the things most to be desired. You are apt to restrict him too much if you attempt great restraint too early. I believe in letting things come naturally as much as possible. (See Mr. Robert Bruen's letter published further along in this book.)

One of the best things for a puppy before you start the actual lessons is that he may have been farm raised and by self-hunting start to acquire an amount of natural "bird sense."

CHAPTER II

GETTING ON GAME

ABOUT this time I was talking with a friend about the breaking of his two young Pointers and we decided to take our dogs out together for a run—although this thing of taking young dogs into the field together is a very poor practice as a rule. They are a bad influence on each other. It is better to take only one young dog at a time, and with a dependable old dog to set a good example. But the stage which our dogs had reached at that time was not such that much harm could result, as none of them were far enough along to have anything to spoil. My friend, who had been the last President of the Dayton Pointer Club, was as ardent a dog lover as myself—which is saying a good deal. He invited me to go out to his father's place, about five miles from town, and promised that we would find

at least five or six coveys of quail to work on—*there being nothing in Ohio's "song bird" law against making them fly.*

Before we had made our first trip there, however, my little boy suddenly came down with scarlet fever and that threw our plans to the four winds. I was quarantined away from home; and made a business trip to Chicago. When I returned my friend 'phoned me one day and suggested that we go out *early* the following morning. I asked him what he meant by "early" and he replied that no hour would frighten him. We bickered back and forth, stalling, until I named the hour of five—and five it was agreed upon for the next morning. That was the start of as pleasant a period as I have ever known, had it not been for the fact of my boy's illness. As he was out of danger, however, I had nothing to fear and *every other morning for three weeks we met promptly at 5:00 a. m.*

On the very first of these early expeditions one of the young Pointers made a particularly nice stand and quite a stanch one, too. His master naturally was proud of his dog—and I was just as discouraged as he was

pleased, for Byrd banged right along with no attempt at stopping. My friend tried to console me by saying: "Just you wait—some day you'll come along and find that little bitch all doubled up on point. Wait till it comes to her—which is just what will happen some good day when you least expect it."

"Well, when that day comes," I answered, "I'll buy the ginger ale for the crowd." Yes, and I'd have bought more. I just felt as though what I wanted more than anything else in the whole wide world was for that puppy to make her first real point.

One thing must be said in her favor at this stage, however, and that is she was learning the incidentals of good field work—how to manipulate fences and independently take care of herself generally. I certainly had good reason to be particularly pleased with the way she negotiated the highest and meanest of fences. Several times after we had returned home I noticed that she had cut herself quite badly, yet had never complained or given any sign. If your young bird dog has spent a period in the country, as is a very

good thing, some of these things, such as getting over, through or under fences will be picked up naturally by himself. Otherwise, it becomes a part of the regular education. It is a great pleasure to own a dog that will, of his own accord, "take" fences that his running-mates cannot negotiate or are afraid to tackle. "It's all a part of the game," as Harvey King would say. With more maturity, of course, your dog should become expert at getting through fences, as well as over them, and thus waste as little time and effort as possible. If he isn't of the oversized, awkward variety this acquirement will the more readily be attained. I never like to see an unwieldy dog. But this, of course, is purely a personal prejudice.

Oh, but those were glorious mornings! It was during late September and early October and the sun would just be peeping over the Eastern horizon as we arrived within sight of the farm where we ran the dogs. Down a long lane we would go back to the fairest little forest you ever saw, beyond which stretched far fields of clover and old corn, ideal cover for the most glorious of

game birds. We were always in the fields by six o'clock and those cool, clear mornings fairly snapped with vigor and made you just tingle with life. All of my days I shall look back with ever present pleasure to those mornings during the breaking of little Byrd. Big and red and bright the sun would crawl up over the sky line of the East and with great deep breaths I would "step on her" in the Ford Sedan, responding to the urge to go—the delight of being up and at 'em. I just couldn't hold myself back and it seemed as if the motor itself must feel likewise. The dogs were ever aquiver with eager excitement to be out.

I could see that Byrd was enjoying these trips—but, let it be said, she was no nearer than ever, so far as I could see, to any actual appreciation of what it was all about. Undismayed, just the same, I kept right on, and one would almost have been amused at my diligence and sincerity in the face of no apparent result. I held an almost sublime faith that some day Byrd would discover what her nose was for. In the meantime I went right along putting her into birds and talking to

her when she flushed them. Much of this latter would have been done away with, you understand, had I been able satisfactorily to use the check cord on her. Also, the *instinct to point* is much stronger in some dogs than in others. You probably often have seen small puppies point sparrows or chickens or just a shadow. In others—and these may be fully as good in the field—the development of the pointing inclination is much slower. In any event it is best not to attempt to stop a young dog up and make him steady too soon. You can *always* do this. The thing you can't do is make him go out unless he wants to naturally or is susceptible to being gently encouraged to do so. Nothing should ever be done that may tend to restrict the development of speed and range and the desire to go out in search of game. Artificial means of stopping a dog up, if employed too early or by one who lacks judgment and experience, may prove the ruination of what might have become a very fine animal under proper handling. I can only add here that the lack of good judgment in handling dogs is appalling—it is cruel to contemplate how

many thousands of good dogs are misused through ignorance as well as lack of sympathy and appreciation.

For the benefit of those amateurs not acquainted with the use of the check cord (which does have its place, of course, if used in the proper way and at the right time) let me explain that a good plan is to take about forty feet of stout cord or light clothes line, at the end of which is tied a small ring, through which the cord is passed to make a loop, with plenty of play. When on birds, slip this loop or noose over the dog's head and hold him to a point by restraining his desire to run in and flush. He will soon learn, then, what it is all about and what is wanted of him. The noose pinches as the dog strains forward, and thus his impetuosity is overcome. It is also a good idea at such times to repeat some such word as "Steady" or "Careful" or "Whoa"—so that the dog associates the word used with the restraint, and later on, without the cord, he will respond to the word alone. Such a word may then be used ever afterward in hunting when you want to urge caution or curb some tem-

porary impetuosity. You will remember what I formerly said about "*They think too.*" They have tried it and know they can't catch the birds anyway, and this has a great influence when they come to reason it out for themselves and decide that, after all, the best thing to do is just to "stand," which your restraint with the rope so plainly indicates as your desire. This would be true even if you weren't also aided by the *instinct* which is bred in the bone and which makes it natural for your blue-blooded bird dog to point. The only thing is that in some the instinct is stronger than in others and they come to it more quickly. This is often influenced by how much and how well the dog's parents have been hunted.

The same cord is used if the dog chases when the birds are flushed, or before you give the order to "fetch" if a kill has been made. You want your dog *steady to shot and wing*. If he is not naturally so (as some will be found to be) use the check cord even after you have gotten him steady on point, and, when the birds are put up, let the dog chase them for all he is worth—*until he comes to*

the end of that forty feet of check cord! The summersault he gets then will remain with him always in memory and the chances are he will be steady thereafter—and certainly two spills will do it if one doesn't. It is usually a good rule not to attempt to steady a dog down to shot and wing until after he is absolutely stanch on point, else you are apt to make him nervous in handling game. The use of the check cord in making him steady to shot and wing is so certain of results that you have nothing to fear from waiting—whereas a blinker is a possible result if you attempt too many things at once when steadying him down to the point. Be governed, too, in the use of the check cord by your dog's disposition—whether he is naturally timid or bold. If the latter, you haven't much to fear; but if he is timid, be careful. It may help you, also, to bear in mind that, as a rule, a Pointer is bolder than a Setter and hence will stand more force. A Setter usually needs urging rather than restraint, while with a Pointer it is generally the reverse.

Being denied the use of the check cord on

Byrd, and dependent entirely upon making her understand what was wanted by talking to her, coupled with her desire to do what she knew I wished, made the job of training her much more delicate than otherwise—but at the same time doubled the interest in trying to accomplish the purpose I had set out to attain. I had this much to go on: I knew that she *wanted* to do the right thing—any dog does. It thus became my duty simply to make my desires so clearly known as to leave no chance for any uncertainty or conflict of purpose. You will find your whole training job lightened if you go on the supposition that the right sort of a dog wants to do right rather than wrong; and your job is to make the right thing clear to him.

One day when we were coming back through a ragweed field on our way home—all of a sudden, just ahead where the field joined a deep woods, there arose such a clatter as reminded me of that poem of early childhood, “ ’Twas The Night Before Christmas.” It proved to be a big covey of pheasants that had flushed immediately in front of Byrd. They made enough noise to fluster

even a staid old English Bull dog—never have I seen so many pheasants in one bunch. I could not see Byrd from where I was, but my companion could, and I asked him what she did.

“There she is, still standing like a little rock,” he answered, with as much enthusiasm as if she had been his own. But I didn’t know what to think about it. She had flushed the big birds, to be sure, whether accidentally or otherwise. Yet, having done the deed, she was absolutely stanch to wing. I put it down to astonishment at the size of them (the first pheasants she had ever seen) and the great racket they made that she remained steady to wing, rather than from any correct definite intention on her part. I think she was simply too astonished to move—else I feel sure she would have chased them. She had not yet reached the stage of development where I might even expect steadiness of this sort from her. In which diagnosis I believe I am correct.

Be that as it may, the day of the pheasants marked a milestone in the training of Byrd. From then on I think she was just a

little bit more "birdy," just a little keener and more active and enthusiastic in the field. She had seen game at close range—big birds that could not help but thrill her—and it was noticeable in all her work thereafter.

CHAPTER III

GUN-SHYNESS AND RETRIEVING

I NOW felt it advisable to test Byrd out for gun-shyness. The thought was hastened by a friend inquiring if I were sure she was not gun-shy, and I could tell by the way he said it, that he had his doubts due to her natural timidity. I answered confidently that I was sure she would not be. Nevertheless, I determined to put her to the test without waiting longer. My boy's little 22 rifle was used as the first firearm of which we pulled trigger over her. I used "longs" so as to get some mild sort of noise—yet these in the open air make but a slim imitation of a shotgun's sound. Even with this mild sounding arm, however, I would not risk a shot until she was "in game." The next time Byrd flushed a quail I shot at it with the little rifle as it flew away. Oh joy, oh bliss—she would not be gun-shy if this

were any criterion! She heeded the shot not at all. So far, so good—but we must go further. It was necessary that she soon come to *understand what a gun is for*.

A couple of days after the first test just mentioned I took Byrd out to Ray Vance's farm along the Miami River, where there are plenty of birds. We flushed a most wonderful covey that day, I remember, and I was more than usually downhearted that my little bitch had not yet conceived the idea of absolute steadiness on point, for which fulfillment of my desires I so earnestly prayed because I wanted to have her ready to shoot over when the season opened. As a matter of fact, I might better have given my attention to other worries—for the big thing is to get a dog to *go out*. You can always stop them up when they're really ready for it; but to give them the urge to go out boldly and stay out is the most ticklish phase of training, especially if you have them under perfect control all the while—yet the thrill of watching a fast, wide-going dog is the purest poetry of pleasure that it is possible for a field dog to give.

Back by Ray's barn were some pigeons flying overhead and I asked him if he wouldn't go and get his shotgun. This, then, was to be the first real test of gun-shyness. It *should* have been made on quail—but tame pigeons are not yet classed as "song birds" and so we chose these. Just as one passed directly over Ray's head he pulled the trigger—and, before Byrd had even a chance to show fear, the pigeon came tumbling to the ground almost at her feet. She promptly grabbed it, and this gave us a chance to give her the first lesson in retrieving. I tried to get her to "Fetch" just by talking to her, but she either did not comprehend or else simply would not do it.

Ray then started to take the pigeon from her—and that excited her interest. We kept up this game, Byrd trying to keep it from him and Ray trying to get it from her. Every time she let go of it he would start for it and then she raced for it again. Finally she tired of this and dropped the pigeon far to one side. When Ray, however, went to get it, and she noticed what he was going to do, she quickly ran and grabbed it up and

brought it to me—clearly indicating that she wanted me to aid her in keeping it from Vance who was trying to take it from her. That gave me the looked-for and longed-for opportunity. I patted her and praised her so that she understood I was pleased with what she had done in bringing the pigeon to me. Furthermore, the minute I saw her headed in my direction with it, I began to say “Fetch” encouragingly, and kept repeating this so that as she approached she would associate this word with the bringing of the pigeon to me, and the subsequent receiving of my compliments.

When I took the pigeon from her and she saw that she had thus kept it from Vance, she was delighted with the game. The next thing on the program was to repeat the proposition and have her again get it away from Vance and bring it to me. We took the pigeon to the pasture gate and threw it over into the pasture. I told her to go “Fetch,” but she had not yet made up her mind that she would do this unless the game were being played. Yet, the minute Ray started to open the gate and go for the pigeon, she

made a bold dash for it and brought it back to me again to the same old tune of "Fetch," and again she received my praise and my pats. From this start it was not a far cry to have her understand that when I said "Fetch" I meant for her to bring to me whatever it was that might be indicated; and she also came to understand that as a result of the satisfactory doing of this thing she would receive my compliments and praise in no uncertain terms. It required, then, but a reasonable amount of practice until she took delight in it and would bring to me whatever it was intended she should retrieve. We thus at one and the same time proved that she was not gun-shy and also gave her the first lessons in retrieving. It goes without saying that we were careful not to tire her, and stopped while Byrd was still keen for the game. This was important to results—is always important, in fact.

I might say at this point that it would be well, when possible, to have a dog broken to retrieve by the force system. By the plan I pursued with Byrd you have no way to compel them to obey your command if they do

not do so willingly. Training by the force system is different. I didn't use it on Byrd—but just the same I recommend the force system as the safest and most satisfactory for permanent and unfailing results. There are several methods in vogue, but the following is probably at least the equal of any of them and I am pleased to be able to offer it to my readers. It is the system used for many years, with the most successful results, by Mr. R. J. McCullagh to whom we are indebted for the balance of this chapter.

FORCE RETRIEVING

No. 1. Devote time and energy toward interesting the dog to take an object from the hand and hold it until you take it from him.

No. 2. Never begin this step until he has thoroughly understood No. 1. Then induce him to pick up the pad or corn cob and turn with it to you. All the while keep him on a short line, and keep his attention concentrated on his work. This may last one day or perhaps weeks, according to the disposi-



LAVERSTOKE POWDER-HORN

The Springer Spaniel of late has come to the front as a very desirable dog for the mixed bag. One of the foremost breeders of the day is Mr. E. Chevrrier, of Winnipeg. The picture above shows Mr. Chevrrier's famous Springer, Laverstoke Powder-Horn, winner of the first spaniel field trials ever held in America.



MR. R. J. McCULLAGH

Mr. McCullagh is an ardent advocate of force retrieving—and who boasts of splendid results from his system as detailed on page 36.

tion of the dog or ability of the trainer. *Take Time. Don't Hurry. Teach Thoroughly.*

No. 3. The check cord is removed and the dog is free. The object is thrown out a short distance and same order is given as in No. 1 and No. 2. Always have him deliver in a sitting posture. Note well as to the dog's interest in his lessons and his willingness to obey. If contrary or slow in this lesson take him back to No. 1 and No. 2 for a short time. Then again to No. 3.

No. 4. It is usually quite easy. You simply increase the distance until he will bring the object from any distance and deliver.

No. 5. A glove is an excellent object to use, and the place should be in an open field where you can drop it and have him *seek dead*, etc. He will soon learn to go back for a long distance and fetch anything within reason, but not unless he has been faithfully drilled in preceding lessons.

No. 6. Assuming that he is proficient in No. 4 and No. 5 take him afield for *real work*, and when a bird is down be sure that it is

dead; lead him to it, hold it in your hand so that he cannot grab or bite it. Give him to understand that he must take and hold it easily. Then (*keep a line on him*) pitch the bird out a few yards where he can see it plainly and let him pick it up. *Now you are at the critical point.* Be alert, see that he *turns* the instant the bird is safe in his mouth and have him come direct to you as in No. 4 and No. 5. If first trial is satisfactory, then release him and pitch out again several times or a dozen times until you are sure that he will not bolt with it. If YOU *slip up* on this lesson you will be in for a lot of trouble and then must go back to former lessons and bring him on again by easy stages, using force collar whenever he shows disposition to sulk. Once the dog is properly taught by this system he is a retriever forever, because the remedy is always at hand in case of a setback.

NOTE—Never insist on working a dog, young or old, while the weather is hot, because the object is difficult to hold. Most dogs are easy to handle if the master is *patient and reasonable*. Occasionally you

will find one that will resort to tricks to avoid his lessons and perhaps refuse absolutely. Then begin again at whichever step you decide is the best and bring him on again. No foolishness with this method; it's all business. Spectators are especially objectionable in the early stages.

CHAPTER IV

MORE ABOUT GUN-SHYNESS AND RETRIEVING

A NUMBER of years ago there was a little group of enthusiastic hunters and lovers of sporting dogs who banded together for annual excursions into the Dakota country, where for thirty days or more each season they would revel in their favorite fields. They called themselves The Dakota Hunting Club—and never did more congenial souls find joy in the kind of life we love. It was the writer's pleasure the other day to spend an hour with one of the men who was an active member of this most interesting club during the days of its glory. I found keen thrills looking through his pictures, reading his clippings of deeds and dogs, and just listening to his descriptions of the "old days" now gone. My friend, Judge Brown, showed me, among other things, an old letter written to him almost a quarter century ago by a brother member, Jim Crane,

in regard to the training of a couple of their Chesapeake Bay dogs. I asked the Judge to let me publish the letter, and here it is, copied word for word as Mr. Crane wrote it in long hand on April 13, 1901:

As promised, I give you herewith the history of the two pups which you are about to send to the farm for one of your men there to keep, with the understanding that any one of the Dakota Hunting Club may get either or both dogs to hunt with at any time on an order from you or me.

The breed of Chesapeake Bay dogs originated in Maryland in the year 1800. They are bred for duck dogs exclusively and are the best in the world. This dog Leander, called "Andy" for short, is a fine specimen of the breed. He is by my dog Nix, out of my bitch Judy II, both registered in the American Kennel Club Stud Book. He and his ancestors are all "Sedg" brown color, which is the only proper color for Chesapeakes. He was whelped in August, 1898. Was trained by a professional trainer and has had considerable experience on game. He is taught to be obedient to command and whistle, to "drop" when ordered, to come to heel when told, and to return from land and water *at command*, but not to run in as soon as the shot is fired. *This must never be permitted.*

The pointer Grousemoor, called "Grouse" for short, was born May 28, 1900. He is by Ripstone, out of Jingo's Lady. He is a grandson of Champion Rip-Rap on one side and Champion Jingo on the other and he is one of the best-bred pointers in the world. He has had three months' training by one of the best trainers in the country, who pronounces him a fine dog. He is taught to obey the whistle and command, to drop when ordered, to be steady to shot and wing, to point and back another dog pointing. He is young and inexperienced and must be held down to his work. He should be controlled by firm and gentle treatment. He has not been taught to retrieve, but he should be. Retrieving is easy to teach. It should be taught first in the yard, using some soft object which feels as much like a bird as possible. Put a cord on the dog's collar about twenty feet long. Put the object to be retrieved in his mouth, hold it there and lead him along, saying in a low voice, but distinctly, "Fetch," then as you remove it from his mouth say, "Give it to me." Never let him drop it. Persist in this until he will carry it; when he drops it, give a sharp pull on the cord and put it into his mouth again. The most difficult part is to make him pick it up from the ground. It will take some pains and patience to do this, but it can always be done; after he returns this object perfectly hide it in the grass and

bushes and make him hunt it up, saying, "Dead bird, fetch." After he has learned to return this object and likes to do it, kill a bird of the kind which you expect to shoot, and teach him to return it about the yard. If he refuses to pick it up check him with the cord and put it into his mouth and make him do it. If he attempts to chew or mangle the bird, pinch his lips severely, until he mouths it tenderly. Do not try to make him retrieve in the field until all of this is taught. When birds are flushed or the gun is fired, he must be made to drop and must stay down until ordered to retrieve, or to go on. This is the most important of all as a dog which runs in is worse than no dog at all.

This pup is young and if he is properly controlled now he will make a great dog.

Hunting dogs should be kept reasonably thin. They should be fed once a day, in the evening after the day's work is over, all they will eat without urging. The best food for them is mush made from the broth in which bones and meat have been boiled, well salted. Stir corn meal into the broth until it is as thick as possible and cook thoroughly. Feed cold. In summer coarse wheat flour is better than corn meal, as it is not so heating.

Going back again now to the very important subject of gun-shyness I will do so with

the statement that it is almost criminal when a good dog becomes gun-shy. There is little or no excuse for it. If a dog has first been given reason to have *confidence* in his trainer (and until a dog *has* confidence in his trainer no gun should ever be fired near him); and if the first firearm used does not carry too heavy a load; if the dog is accustomed *gradually* to increasingly loud reports; and, chiefly, if the dog is "on game" at the time the first shot is fired, and thus has his attention centered upon the game—and, better still, if that first shot actually brings down the game in his presence—then there is almost no reason at all why any dog should be gun-shy. It is probably safe to say that one or the other, or all, of these fundamental laws are broken in the case of every dog that is gun-shy.

If you send a fairly timid dog to a careless trainer and the first crack out of the box he fires a 10- or 12-gauge shotgun over the dog—and stands too close to the dog at the time—and if there is no game in sight—and the dog's confidence has not yet been won—then the chances are nine out of ten that any dog

will develop gun-shyness right on the spot. If you train your own dog, and use just a little care in the training along the lines I have suggested, you will make the right sort of a start and then there is but little likelihood that gun-shyness will develop later. I can take my Irish Setter out in the field with half a dozen fellows and let them fire a regular barrage into most anything on the face of the earth and she will even like it. She isn't any more gun-shy than I am—but there would have been a mighty good chance in the early days for her to become gun-shy had I not exercised every precaution when the first shooting was done over her.

The following letter is a sample of several such which came to me as a result of the first edition of this book. Because of its definite specificness I deem it worthy of publication—certain readers may feel greater confidence if they know that some of the things I suggest really *will work*. This came dated November 12, 1923, from Dr. C. Kelsay, of Evansville, Ind.

Want to say that I have a Llewellen Setter that I purchased late last fall because he had the markings and looks of a dog that I once had and of which I thought a great deal, which was killed by an automobile. I took my dog out Saturday, November 10th, and remembered that you mentioned in one of the paragraphs that it was better to have a dog on a point before doing any shooting because of being gun-shy and my dog was so gun-shy that usually the sound of a 22-short-rifle shot would make him hunt his dog house, but glad to say that Saturday he came to a point on a single bird and when I shot with a 16-gauge shotgun, he paid absolutely no attention to it whatever. Continued hunting and in a short time had another bird. This was repeated several times without his paying any attention to the shooting and believe his gun-shyness is a thing of the past and that he will make as good a dog as the one I lost.

This alone is worth the price of the book and your other stories come about as near to being true descriptions and true understanding of the canine species as anything I have ever read.

Some time back Mr. George Breunig, of Bloomer, Wisconsin, sent me a young dog for training, but she was recalled for the season before she was much more than started. His letter, which follows, is self-explanatory

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and I am publishing my reply verbatim because the gun-shyness phase of it may prove of value:

December 14, 1923.

Mr. J. Horace Lytle,
Mutual Home Building,
Dayton, Ohio.

Dear Sir:

Possibly you will not remember me but maybe you will my bitch, Belle, that you trained for me last spring.

She was struck by an auto a few days before chicken could be hunted so could not use her; but used her on partridge and found that since her accident she is gun-shy. Can a dog be broken of being gun-shy? If you think they can, will appreciate any suggestions you might offer as to how to proceed to correct this fault.

At the time I wrote you last summer I had about decided to give her up but *after reading your book* I gave her another chance and she was doing fine until she was injured.

I have become very much attached to her and want to keep her for my shooting dog if possible.

Yours very truly,

GEO. N. BREUNIG.

January 5, 1924.

Bloomer, Wisc.

Dear Mr. Breunig:

I must apologize for the delay in answering your letter of Dec. 14th, in which you tell me about your English Setter, Belle, and ask if I can suggest anything in the matter of curing her of gun-shyness.

Your letter pleased me a great deal and I regard it as one of the best testimonials I have ever received for my bird-dog book because you state that after reading the book you developed Belle into a very good partridge and prairie chicken dog. This specific result is more complimentary than a thousand words of empty praise.

I might say further than I remember Belle very well indeed and especially recall the very first day we had her in the field when she made a covey find and was as stanch as stone on her point, although when flushed I thought she would continue chasing the birds over into the next county. That, however, is one of the easiest things to correct and it only requires a little time and patience. It is often impossible to inculcate the hunting instinct and desire into a dog, but a dog which already has these can be steadied down.

The inquiry in your letter, however, is on the sub-

ject of gun-shyness. I am sorry that Belle has developed this tendency because she never did like a gun any too well, although I had hoped she would come to feel more friendly to it as game was killed over her. Correcting this evil, however, is something that you yourself can do better than any one else, and I will make what suggestions I can. From what you say of Belle in your letter I infer that the unfortunate auto accident is the cause behind her timidity having increased to actual gun-shyness.

In the first place, be absolutely sure that Belle has implicit confidence in you and do not give her any cause to strain this implicit confidence. If she loves you and has the proper confidence, then you have the right foundation to work on.

In the second place, try to pay absolutely no attention to the fact that she is afraid of a gun. The great trouble with most people is that they become so worried over the fact of gun-shyness that they show the dog they are worried, and then the dog thinks there is really something to worry about. Consequently the condition is merely aggravated. The thing to do is to try to appear absolutely unconcerned and as though you did not even notice the gun-shy condition. Then she will think there is nothing to notice and you will begin to make some progress.

Try tying her securely to her kennel and let her

get very hungry. Then give her a good dinner of food that she particularly craves, and very unconcernedly shoot a little 22 rifle at sparrows or other birds which may be about. You might start with just beebee caps and then work up to shorts and finally to longs. It will be a tedious job, but to cure Belle will be well worth while.

Another plan, particularly after you have made some attempts with a 22 rifle, will be to take Belle with you to some trap-shooting event and just keep her on lead while the guns roar. You pay absolutely no attention to her and take all the interest you want in watching the shooting at the clay birds. Just let Belle lunge and pull and jerk and jump until she wears herself out, and still you must not appear to notice it at all. Your apparent unconcern during such a trial as this may accomplish the purpose. The more *natural* you make your ignoring of her the better it will be.

By all means do not let any of your friends, or other persons, appear to notice the dog's fright any more than you do. The principal thing is not to expect to accomplish a cure too quickly and do not become impatient at lack of prompt results.

A friend was telling me not long ago of a gunshy dog for which he cared enough to go to any pains to cure, and he said that every day he took that dog with him to an old barn and started by using

a revolver with gradually increasing loads until the dog finally became inured to the explosions and ultimately was cured of the disease. Personally, I am a little afraid of that method—one reason being that a particularly heavy discharge might have a tendency to deafen the dog, and a dog that cannot hear you is often worse than no dog at all.

Now, I am going to refer to a simpler plan than either of these, which is worth trying and which it occurs to me in Belle's particular case may possibly work out.

Equip yourself with a light gun, if possible not over a 20-gauge, but do not permit any one else to go with you into the field. Belle may be afraid of a number of guns, particularly if some of them are in the hands of people she does not know, whereas this may not be the case to such an extent if you are alone with her. Do not shoot at anything which flushes wild. Make it an inviolate rule never to shoot except over a steady point. Do *not* shoot even if she is making game and something flushes ahead of her. Let her come positively to rest on a stanch point before you even think of pulling a trigger. When she is on a stanch point and absorbed with the scent of game, the chances are she won't even notice the discharge of merely one light gauge gun, particularly if that gun is in the hands of her master in whom she has confidence and if you

add to this the ability to kill a pretty high percentage of the game at which you shoot.

I believe this plan in Belle's case may prove the best scheme of all. I know she is so much interested in her hunting that if you shoot only over stanch points you are pretty apt to bring her out of her disease, at least gradually, and will ultimately cure her, provided you do not get enthusiastic too quickly and subject her to the heavy artillery of a number of friends whose main idea is to fill the air with shot every time they see or hear something that looks like game.

Trusting that my suggestions may be of some value to you, and assuring you that I shall appreciate it if you will let me know the result, as I am particularly interested, I remain

Yours very cordially,

J. HORACE LYTLE.

Now that we seem to have the letter-quoting habit in this chapter, and since it refers in particular to the Dakota Hunting Club mentioned in the Jim Crane letter a few pages back, this is probably just as appropriate a place as we shall find in the entire book to quote another interesting letter that came to me from a reader of the first edition.

There is in this letter, I think, a strong human interest—coming out of a clear sky from a man who left my native city three years before I was born, although he has my family spotted perfectly. Yet this is not the reason for printing it here—for the public is not interested in that. The information on the matter of handling prairie chickens is, however, a subject of general interest among bird-dog men and Mr. Bruen's letter is quoted because of what he says along these lines, and also for the reason that he puts the stamp of approval upon the process of training a dog along *natural lines* such as I advocate.

Having seen an advertisement of your book *Breaking a Bird Dog*, I sent for it and was very much interested in the book when it came, especially so as I was born in Dayton, Ohio, and attended the old Cooper Academy with Harvey J. King, who with Ed. Grimes, Harries Gorman and "Doc" Houk were my hunting companions.

I don't just place you, but your picture looks very much like Harry Lytle, and I am wondering if you are the little Johnny Lytle that was a youngster when I left home in 1881; or whether you are a son

of Harry's. At any rate, I was very much interested in the Outers-Recreation articles on dogs while you were the editor of that column, and I noticed with pleasure the inset of the oil painting by Harvey King; and here incidentally will say that Harvey took lessons in painting from my aunt, who is now Mrs. J. H. Pierce, so you see I am pretty familiar with the situation in Dayton and the old timers.

Your methods of breaking a dog have been similar to those that I have experienced in substance, and it has always been my practice to yard break the dog first, get him to be chummy and have confidence in me before I took him into the field. When in the field I studied his natural inclinations and sought to correct only his faults, which I have found a very successful process.

You refer to Judge Britt Brown and Jim Crane. It was Jim Crane that I got my last two pointer puppies from. They were Rip Rap and Jingo stock, and they certainly were world beaters. I trained them myself. The picture of "Old John" in Harvey King's inset is almost a perfect picture of "Old Logan," the dog that Jim sent me.

In your book you mention the Dakota Hunting Club as shooting in the Black Hills Country. It happens that Judge A. A. Winters, who was a member of the club, wrote P. H. Gunckel here, advising

that their former location on the Gilfillan farm near Marshall, Minnesota, had been unsatisfactory for several years and they wished him to select a new location for them. I had just come down from North Dakota a short time before, so Mr. Gunckel took the matter up with me, and I finally located the Dakota Hunting Club at Stump Lake, North Dakota, which is south and east of Devil's Lake, and there they hunted for a number of years with great success. I remember on their first trip out they wired me they would stop over a day in Minneapolis to rest their dogs, so I spent the day with them; saw all of their dogs and heard their tales of how finely they were bred and trained, some of them being field-trial and derby winners, but all of the highest breeding. I learned they were trained entirely on quail, but said nothing then. However, when they returned I asked them how their dogs worked, and they told me they were very disappointed, that mongrel dogs they picked up out there beat them all hollow. It was then I advised them where the mistake was made; as when I went to Fargo in '81 I took up my Irish Setter that had never seen a prairie chicken, but was used on quail, jacksnipe and woodcock. It took me nearly all the fall season to break him to stop soon enough, though he did not run in or intend to flush. Of course I was working in the office and only had one day a week to devote to him,

so in a measure I was handicapped. After advising them of this and proving to them that a bird dog should be broken on chickens first and quail afterwards, they followed the suggestion in future and had no trouble.

I do not recollect who came out with the first installment of the Dakota Hunting Club, but there was Jim Crane, Frank Patterson, Dr. Goodhue, Judge Winters and Britt Brown that I know of, and I think Charlie Williams also.

Wishing you success in the handling of your kennels and congratulating you on the delightful manner in which you have placed the methods of dog training before the public in your book, I am,

Yours very truly,

ROBERT L. BRUEN.

CHAPTER V

HUNTING QUAIL AND PHEASANTS

AS long as my shooting days last I shall never forget that first day of the 1922 quail season when I took Byrd over into an adjoining state for actual work. Because, as you very well know, you simply must kill game over dogs or you will find it mighty difficult to finish and refine them for the field. If you have accustomed them to the general proposition of hunting and handling, it will not be a far cry to the finishing touches after you begin to kill birds over them. I didn't take Byrd on that trip with any expectation other than to finish her training. I didn't even expect to make it a hunting expedition. It was a training trip purely and simply. I mention this so emphatically because so many persons go afield with a young dog more intent upon their own selfish and immediate pleasure

than the future welfare of the dog. Try not to yield to this temptation and you will be repaid later on many times over.

Only Ray Vance went with me on this trip and we drove over into our neighbor state with the eager little dog between us. Our hearts were anxious and our ambitions high. Would she rise to the occasion, as we both so ardently hoped? Of course Old Ned went with us, too, to be her example in this, her first real hunt, as he had been through all the days of preliminary education.

The little Setter seemed to sense the situation—seemed to realize that this day would be vastly different from the uncertain play days of the weeks just passed. It wasn't long before Ned made a beautiful stand and down the field behind him came Byrd, eager and intent upon finding game, having by this time come to take a great deal of interest in her field work—and then all of a sudden she saw the splendid liver and white Pointer frozen fast on his find. My heart stood still as I watched her—then the blood raced through my veins and I tingled with a rare



"OLD NED," REGISTERED AS GRAYLING'S ARNAUD, F. D. S. B. 39951

Old Ned is the past master whose splendid example gave Byrd her early inspiration in the field and to whose credit may be laid much of her later success.

delight—for she actually *stood*! She backed her pal, the Pointer, the minute she caught sight of him. Stanch as a little red statue she honored the point of the older dog. We flushed the birds but I was too intent on the dogs to remember to shoot. Ray, however, made a beautiful double. He is an excellent shot.

This, then, was the occasion of Byrd's first real experience in actually handling game. Ned retrieved one of the birds Ray killed, but I wanted to see what Byrd would do, so Ray then held the older dog while I went ahead with Byrd to where the other quail had fallen. Suddenly I saw that *she was actually pointing herself*! A moment she stood thus, and then the little nose slipped forward and she reached into the grass and picked up the dead quail. Then, wonder of wonders, she turned and brought it to me before I even remembered to say "Fetch." I threw my arms about her and praised her with every possible evidence of my enthusiasm so that she might understand it as a reward for her work well done. In the twinkling of an eye she had come into her own. She was

ready to shoot over. All the hard work and worry were a thing of the past.

When you bring bird dogs to the point that Byrd had now reached; when they have actually pointed and birds have been killed over them; when they have retrieved their game; and when they have honored another dog by backing and have remained steady to shot and wing, then all the training from that point on is simply enriching and refining their work afield. There will be no serious slipping back *if they are rightly handled from then on.*

We hunted quail for two more days and thus had a chance to make absolutely certain that it was not all a mistake, and that the little dog would continue to do what she had so well started. Then we returned home for the opening of the pheasant season, for I was particularly anxious to develop her in this direction, believing that the fascination of the work of a good pheasant dog is pretty hard to beat. Our pheasants here in Ohio are more of a test for a dog than quail and when you get a dog that can handle them in a satisfactory manner it is a real treat in-

deed. In passing, however, I must mention the closing episode of that third day on quail. We had just come through a wide expanse of corn stubble and immediately in front of us lay a broad green field in winter wheat, as rich in color as April grass. Ned circled off to the left and then wheeled toward us, when suddenly he stiffened into one of his characteristic attitudes at the far edge of this field. How can I ever forget the way the little red dog backed him on that occasion! Truly, she started to honor Ned's point from a hundred yards away and was perfectly stanch even at that distance. By talking to her and urging caution, we brought her forward until she was backing directly behind the other dog—yet, oh, so carefully. When we flushed the birds they flew in all directions. We were rewarded by bagging three. It made a fitting end to a perfect day.

During each breathing spell while trying to catch up with work back at the office next day, the writer would find some one to tell about Byrd's work on quail. I boasted particularly of the time she beat Ned to the birds and made *him back her*. This had hap-

pened but once, I must confess, for that splendid Pointer was almost unbeatable and he was in front of her on most of the points. Yet he showed his true class as a perfect gentleman when she found them first, and nobly did he back her. That was a moment to make an owner's heart proud—when the little red dog stood in front, with the liver and white Pointer right behind her, gladly paying magnificent honor to her nose—the most perfect tribute that a bird dog can give.

I was unable to get away for the opening day of the pheasant season but four of us were in the fields at sunrise the second day and hunted ragweeds that were almost up to our shoulders in spots and never lower than the waist. Byrd was not accustomed to pheasants and at first a number of them flushed out ahead of her, as they will do so often; but in the course of the day she was able to bring two of them to a dead stand and pointed beautifully. I am glad to say that both of these birds went into the game bag and it was a great inspiration to her thus to be rewarded when she made her points. One of these birds fell stone dead and we

went right to it; but the other was merely wounded and ran as only a pheasant can do. We would surely have lost it, had it not been for the way Byrd trailed it quickly and successfully—ending by bringing the big bird proudly to me.

The territory in which we hunted that day contained over one hundred acres of solid ragweeds and was one of the best pheasant covers existing anywhere in the state. It was so thick we hardly saw the little dog all day. About the only way to follow her was to watch the waving of the weeds as she went through them; then if they ever ceased to move, the chances were she had a point. As already stated, she successfully brought two pheasants to a perfect stand—a pretty good start for the first day of a young dog on new game. Especially so in the case with game as wiley as Ringneck pheasants—than which there is no bird more crafty and difficult to circumvent. One of the things that was mentioned particularly by those in the party was Byrd's *industry* in her work. All day long she wove and wound her way through that terrible tangle of weeds and it

was almost dark when we called her out of it at the close of the day.

I picked Byrd up, as she seemed pretty tired, and put her on the back seat of the machine, and did not have occasion to notice her again until we had arrived at the house. There had not been a sound out of her and I was quite sure she was rather exhausted. Arrived at home, I called her forth and she went with me into the house. I recall that dinner was ready—but I told the good wife they would have to wait for me until I had fed the faithful dog which had surely earned her reward. I spoke to my son and told him to look her over for burrs and get them out of her, in order that she might be comfortable, and I went to get her supper. Suddenly my boy called out: “She can’t see! She’s blind!”

I rushed into the room and it was true that Byrd appeared unable to open her eyes. I didn’t wait to examine her—but went to the ’phone and called a veterinary, whom I requested to wait for me; and I carried Byrd back to the machine and rushed her right in to his office. It developed that her eyes were

full of weed seeds, but she had never whimpered nor complained all day long. With an instrument the veterinary took the stuff from the little dog's eyes and treated them with boracic acid. He said there was still some danger but did not believe she would go blind and gave me much hope for her. I took Byrd home, fed her, and put her in her kennel, with a nice big bunch of clean warm straw around her so she might be as comfortable as possible.

Only once did she make a sound—and that was in the dead of the night when she gave three or four soft moans that were gently wafted into my room through the open window. I think I was asleep when these sounds reached me on the still night air, but I could not go back to sleep again, for thinking of my loyal little dog suffering all by herself in the kennel just because she had done her duty so well in the field that day for me. She might have quit cold or slowed up; she might at least have come to me and let me know of her trouble—but she did none of these things. She gave absolutely no indication of what she was suffering until my

little boy noticed it at home after the day was over and she had ridden about forty miles in the machine. Surely that was dead game. There are different kinds of game-ness and different ways of showing it—but truly no dog of any type or breed ever did anything much gamer than that. At least, when you consider all the circumstances and particularly the *way* she conducted herself.

The next morning when I went to her, I found that Byrd's eyelids were matted together as tight as though they had been stuck with LePage's glue. It was almost impossible to pry the lids apart. It was only by the use of warm water, softly applied with a sponge, that I was able at last to accomplish this. I then took her to the doctor again and he treated her once more with the boracic acid.

I could not hunt her the following day, but she went with me several other times during the remaining days of the pheasant season. The next time she went into rag-weed she did not suffer any further difficulty with her eyes, although, of course, I was mighty careful of her, especially for a while,

and did not again let her hunt in this type of cover for so long at a stretch. The fields of standing corn furnished plenty of good hunting anyhow and we frequented these. It soon seemed, however, as though she was beginning somehow to take better care of herself and to understand how to avoid getting the weed seeds into her eyes again, after that first experience.

I don't need any one to tell me whether or not Byrd is game. I've owned pit dogs myself and seen them fight, and I want to say that, while their work calls for a different type of gameness, yet it is not greater than that shown by my little Red Setter when she kept right on doing her duty all day long without a fault or a flinch in spite of the pain she must have suffered.

CHAPTER VI

A SUCCESSFUL PHEASANT HUNT

ON Saturday, the 25th of November, 1922, the last day of the pheasant season, Byrd certainly covered herself with glory. Her work was a sufficient reward for all my efforts and a justification of my simple methods of *natural* training. That day was one of the pleasantest in all my hunting experience and shall live always in my memory.

The alarm clock sounded a little after three o'clock in the morning, inasmuch as our engagement was for 5:15 in Piqua, and we had to drive about twenty-eight miles to get there. I was anxious for at least a roll and a cup of coffee before leaving Dayton. Mr. Harvey J. King wanted to get material for some paintings of points on pheasants and I had invited him to be my guest for the day. It would be hard to express my disgust and dismay when I arrived at the King home

that cold, dark morning and found no light at all, nor even any apparent way to arouse the artist. Failing in the effort, I finally went back to Sargent's restaurant and had some coffee, eggs and toast. I had become reconciled to making the trip to Piqua alone but was pretty provoked at the delay incurred.

Just as a sort of wild-goose-chase gamble, however, I drove by Mr. King's house on the chance that he might have arisen since I had last been there. This time I found a light! Mr. King himself answered my summons. The first reaction at seeing him only half dressed, when we should already have been well on our way to Piqua, was one of almost resentment—but this immediately passed away before his look of mingled bewilderment and regret. I have never seen a more mystified expression in my life. He had simply overslept and was still in a somewhat dazed condition, due, probably, to the early hour. His alarm clock either had failed him or he had slept right through its clatter. I suspected the latter, but did not say so. My impatience melted before his pathetic ex-

pression. I felt, furthermore, that sufficient punishment lay in my brusque statement that he couldn't expect a bite of breakfast before we reached Piqua. I called his attention to the time, and urged haste. He came through wonderfully and in a mighty few minutes we were all set and ready to go. And *go* we did. We left Mr. King's house at exactly 4:30 in the morning and were due in Piqua, twenty-eight miles away, at promptly 5:15. That gave us only three-quarters of an hour. Yet it was just forty-five minutes later that I stopped the little bus in front of our meeting place by the Piqua post office. Of course the lack of traffic at that early hour had helped us make speed.

The fellows in Piqua seemed almost disappointed that we got there on time. I believe now that they scarcely thought we would. I think they rather had hoped to have an opportunity to josh us about promising to be there at 5:15 and not making it. But the tables were turned. It gave us no little satisfaction to find, on arrival, that only one of the Piqua hunters was already wait-

ing and the other one did not arrive until some five minutes later. The fairly prompt connections all around gave us a chance to have our breakfast without haste and it wasn't long before we were skipping along, headed for the shooting ground. We found quite a little snow east of Piqua, and it was just getting light when we arrived at the farm which was our destination.

Byrd was the only dog in the party, but she proved equal to the task. I prize very highly a letter received a few days later from John Reymiller, one of the Piqua hunters, in which he compliments the little Setter and predicts for her a splendid future as a shooting dog. She made an impression, as she has never failed to do, by her industry and by her good sense displayed in the finding and handling of the birds. Even though Byrd has since become a field-trial winner, bringing me several trophies, and many letters from all parts of the land, nevertheless the memory of those earlier days is just as bright as ever—though the promise she held out then has been fulfilled.

Over one fence and across a short field

from the barnyard we found ourselves in the thickest and best pheasant cover that it has ever been my fortune to see. The only trouble was the great effort it caused Byrd in her work. It was a terrible strain on her and very tiring the way she had to leap up and over the tangled masses of fallen clover matted with snow.

We hadn't gone very far before two birds got up in front of Mr. King and he missed delightfully with both barrels. There sure were pheasants in that patch of clover. Before we had gone the length of it each one of us, except John Reymiller, had been granted at least one shot. Pheasant certainly carry away a lot of lead, so we will not attempt to prophesy here how many were clean misses. Suffice it to say that no birds were bagged. We crossed a rather open field where we had seen some of the pheasants fly and in a minute or two after going over that fence into an orchard bordering the field, Byrd made a pretty point. She held it nicely, but as we came up to her the bird fluttered up into an apple tree straight overhead. That was the funniest

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performance the little Setter had ever seen, and she did not know what to make of it. This pheasant had previously been wounded and could not fly far. It was easily bagged.

Al Hochwalt was asking me not long since about pheasant shooting and inquired as to the difficulty of bagging them as easily as their size would seem to warrant. He said that once at a field trial out in the northwest an old quail shot spoke lightly of pheasant shooting. They asked him how many he thought he could hit and he replied that if he could not kill ten straight he would buy the dinner for the crowd. The wager was promptly accepted and a hunt arranged for the following day. After missing the first three straight the old quail shooter gave up further effort in disgust—and paid the bet. I have seen fellows who can pretty regularly knock them cold—but it isn't quite as easy as rolling off a log.

From the orchard we entered directly into a very wide expanse of splendid cover, across which we tramped four abreast with Byrd quartering the field diligently in front of us. Yet we crossed this entire field without

putting up one single bird. At the far end, when we came to the high wire fence that bordered it, we stood for a few moments in some indecision as to the most likely direction in which to launch our next effort.

While we were still thus conversing, my attention was suddenly called to as pretty a point as the heart might wish to see. Byrd was crowded right up against the edge of the fence, which also was the edge of the best cover, and she was not forty feet from where we stood. I just *knew* she had something—she had never failed me nor fooled me whenever she straightened out into one of her characteristic points. I was as confident that there was either a pheasant or a covey of quail in front of her, as I would have been could I actually have seen whatever it was with my own eyes.

Regardless of what I might have expected, however, I was not prepared for what greeted me when I walked in to flush. It is true that down on the Watkins' farm, while training before the season opened, we did flush a splendid covey of a dozen or more pheasants which rose as simultaneously as a



SMADA BYRD AND THE OLD-FASHIONED RAIL FENCE

There will never be better cover for quail than the protected corners afforded by the old-fashioned rail fence of days gone by. There are not so many to be seen to-day in certain sections of the country—hence, Horace Lytle feels especially pleased to have this particular picture of Smada Byrd with such a fence for the border and background of its setting.

covey of quail. But not once during the actual pheasant season had we flushed more than two pheasants from the same spot at the same time, until this very last day. Yet it was a *covey* that Byrd had in front of her then. At least six or eight splendid pheasants rose at one time and tore like the wind on their speedy wings across the open space. Verily do I believe, had but one or two birds gotten up, that I should have nailed at least one of them. But I was not expecting so many and when they all flushed at once I was simply swept off my feet—and *missed them all!*

The other fellows were laughing so hard they could not talk and I was in the same fix from embarrassment. It surely must have been a sore disappointment to Byrd to make a find and stand such as that, only to have it result in naught. She did a splendid job, no matter how much her master messed it up.

We worked for some little time after that before running into any more birds at all. After a bit, however, Byrd began “making game”—but she was unable to bring this

pheasant to a stand. All of a sudden it flushed wild almost out of range—and then it was that we had a chance to discover there was one real shot in the party anyhow. John Reymiller was the hero on this occasion. It was a long shot, but he bagged the bird. This was the first time John had pulled trigger that day, but after that first shot there was nothing to the party but Reymiller. Up to that time none of the pheasants had gotten up in front of him. After that they didn't get up in front of any one else; which was mighty stupid of the pheasants, for the rest of us might have missed them—John Reymiller never missed any.

But to return to that first long try which broke the ice for John that day—it was certainly a pretty effort and the result was a thrillingly fine reward for a splendid shot. The bird, however, was only wing tipped and started off like a race horse the minute it hit the ground. We had the treat of our lives watching Byrd chasing to retrieve it. It is like finding a needle in a haystack to bag a wounded pheasant without the help of a good dog. The little Setter's tail

waved merrily as she followed what her nose told her was the pheasant's trail. Soon she caught it and right proudly did she bring back to us the splendid feathered monarch held easily between her dainty jaws. Then she did a strange thing, showing the intelligence of some dogs—she took that bird straight up to John Reymiller, who had shot it, and never thought of bringing it to me at all. Usually a dog will do just the reverse of this and retrieve all game to his master only, regardless of who kills it—but Smada Byrd has always been an exception to the rule.

To digress for a minute, however, the trouble with shooting as well as our friend from Piqua is that your fun is over too soon. Here it was the last day of the season—the last chance to shoot pheasants for a whole year—yet John had shot three times (which meant that he had the limit of three cock birds in his bag) and was in a machine on his way back to Piqua before the fun for the rest of us had hardly begun. We still had the better part of a day of splendid sport ahead of us—yet he was all through in a couple of

hours and had the whole dreary day ahead of him with nothing to do for a year, so far as pheasants were concerned. About three weeks later, however, John's wedding was announced—which information may throw some light on his speed with the pheasants and his subsequent haste to get back to town.

In regard to Byrd's work that day, let it be said that she at least "made game" on every pheasant we got. Not that she brought each one to a dead stand—though she did bring all but two of them to that desired result. This record was something of an achievement for any dog, let alone a mere puppy in her first season. It is pretty hard to prevent pheasants from flushing wild. Thus I have come to feel that, in many ways, a good dog on pheasants gives you more thrills than is the case with any other game. Pheasants carry away so much shot, hence there are so many brought out of the air that are merely wing tipped and run like the mischief, that the work of retrieving these cripples is most exciting. Furthermore, it is such a nice and delicate art

to bring this wary and tricky bird to an actual stand—that successful performance by a dog in this respect is something to be heralded as a real accomplishment in the course of a day's sport.

After our star shooter had left, we did not chance upon any more pheasants during the forenoon, although Byrd made a stand on a dandy covey of quail at the edge of a thick woods. It would be hard to describe her perfectly apparent disappointment as I flushed that covey in front of her and failed to shoot. She seemed to say: "Well, if you're not even going to try to get them when I find them, what's the use!" Dogs are often mighty particular about what takes place as a result of the work they do. They often lose interest if their work doesn't seem to be properly bearing fruit. I have never personally seen it, but I have it on good authority, that dogs have even been known to refuse to keep on hunting if too many shots are missed over their points. I can well believe it, for "They think too," you know, and they like their good work to be matched by equally good work with the gun.

CHAPTER VII

WONDERFUL WORK

THE farmer on whose land we hunted joined us in the afternoon, taking John Reymiller's place, and we got four cock pheasants among the party, three of which furnished particularly good dog work. We were walking four abreast through the same field in which that morning Byrd had pointed the whole flock of pheasants, when suddenly a cock bird flushed wild and flew directly broadside to our party, thus giving each one a shot in turn.

Mr. King brought him down—but the minute he struck the ground was off like a streak of greased lightning. I raced after him like a wild Indian. He started turning to the left and quickly disappeared in the weeds. Byrd, who was ahead of me, wheeled and shot straight down the field in the opposite direction. Her little tail was

wagging so enthusiastically and confidentially that I realized she was trailing hot. I could not seem to believe that the pheasant had turned to go in that direction, because the best cover for him lay to the left in the direction which he had started. But I realized, too, that my Setter's nose was a lot better than my ideas and so I followed her on the run. She must have trailed that bird between three and four hundred yards. Suddenly she reached down—and when her head was raised again she held between her jaws the gorgeous colored pheasant which, but for her splendid work, would surely have escaped for good. My heart was pumping mighty fast as the little dog came to me with the prize.

Just a little later we saw almost this same experience duplicated. The difference was merely sufficient to add variation and interest. We were in another field when Byrd came to a point in front of two of the worst shots in the party. There did not seem to be much likelihood that the bird would be bagged. You can't always tell, however, and after a blaze of artillery as the pheasant

arose, it was seen that one of them had accidentally hit it. The big bird wasn't hit very hard, however. It dropped in an opposite field which was separated from the one we were in by a particularly substantial wire fence, so closely woven that the dog could not get through. Over this fence the two shooters scurried like squirrels, each one claiming that he had hit the bird. I was amused as I watched them; and this amusement only increased when they eventually turned back, very much crestfallen, after having roamed that field in all directions without being able to locate the pheasant which one or both of them had brought out of the air.

All this time I had kept Byrd back with me, as I would not permit her to get over the fence into the field where those boobs were roaming wild. Finally, in desperation, they appealed to me and wanted to know why I hadn't sent the dog over. I just waited patiently until they realized beyond all doubt that the pheasant was unquestionably lost so far as they were concerned. Then I put Byrd over the fence, and it was beautiful to

see her pick up the trail. She covered that whole field in a wide circle and then came straight back toward us. Pheasants will do that—double right back on you—and you will lose them unless you have a dog such as we were blessed with that day.

Pretty soon Byrd came to a dead stand. As I went to her I could see the pheasant facing her, squatted low and blending splendidly into the surroundings. It was such an interesting spectacle that I watched the dog hold the point thus for a minute or two. Then I backed up and walked around to the rear of the pheasant, when I stuck out my foot and touched his tail feathers. There was immediately a terrific rush of wings as he tried to bound into the air straight over Byrd's head. But she was too fast for him! With one quick leap she grabbed him before he could get away and held him firmly, yet carefully, until I came up and took him from her. Thus she had, in the space of but a few moments, trailed one bird that would have got away, caught it while still running and brought it back to me; then in the very next field she had duplicated the perform-

ance, ending this time by bringing the pheasant to a stand so that she was able to accomplish a beautiful point and thus furnish an interesting variation in the work. One thing should be added here for the benefit of the novice. I spoke of Byrd grabbing the pheasant when I flushed it from her point. She should not have done this had the pheasant not been wounded; but dogs should be permitted thus to attempt to retrieve wounded game—and their nose enables them to detect the blood if a bird has been hit. Of course Byrd was also aware of that fact in this case from seeing it fall and trailing it afterwards.

We were treated to one more particularly pretty piece of work before the day was over—the day which closed the season on pheasants in Ohio for an entire year. We were making one last drive through the clover patch nearest the farmer's house, as we knew there were still some pheasants in there that we had not flushed. We were all amused at Mr. King, who had just previously stated vehemently that he would not make another trip through that sweet clover

to save his life. He did make that last trip, however, as I knew he would, for he is a thorough sportsman in every sense of the word. It *was* hard walking; the tangled masses coming at times almost to one's waist, and being matted down with the snowfall of the night before made it all the tougher to tramp through. But it was much harder on the little Irish Setter than it was on us. She was tired almost to utter exhaustion—yet she would not quit while there was still work to do.

Pretty soon we noticed that she was “making game.” It was terribly difficult for her to get through those tangled masses; and yet she *must* get through in order to make her point. She dared not go too fast nor get too close for fear she might flush the bird. The pheasant was moving and that but made her work the harder. Her maneuvering to bring that bird to a stand—her efforts to do it without a flush—and the way she finally accomplished it—would have been a credit even to an experienced pheasant dog. Time after time she came to a stop—and time after time went on. But

with her every effort to make a stand came the realization that the bird was still moving. Finally she dared not work closer straight ahead. It became necessary to back up very carefully and make a cast to right or left and come in again. I think she must have pointed at least six or eight times—only to back up and work in again from a new angle before she forced that pheasant to stop so she could make a sturdy stand.

Mr. King remarked particularly about Byrd's splendid head work in this instance and that was most gratifying to me, for I knew that he has seen dogs work for almost fifty years, all over this country, from Maine to Florida, and even on the far-away Dakota prairies in the old days. These compliments were especially appreciated later when I realized beyond all doubt that Mr. King meant what he said—for, in relating the experiences of our shoot to my boy, he dwelt at some length upon his description of that particular incident, explaining it all in careful detail so that the boy might both understand and appreciate the quality of the performance. It was unquestionably a delicate job well done.



SMADA BYRD—EVER FAITHFUL

Smada Byrd held this point for about fifteen minutes, lost all by herself in the ragweeds, before she was found. She was absolutely honest and true and when flushed she had 'em in front of her. Her great steadiness on this occasion, when there was no one to be any the wiser had she cheated a little, was worthy of an older dog.

The least misstep in that mass of tangled clover would have been fatal to the result as accomplished.

It had been indeed a glorious day and on our ride back to Dayton we found much pleasure in rehearsing the events which I have just been describing. We both came to the conclusion that it had been the most enjoyable pheasant hunt in which either of us had ever participated. And there is no question but that it was a day which would be hard to beat. I will but add that the trip from Piqua to Dayton that night was *not* made in forty-five minutes as had the trip from Dayton to Piqua that morning.

CHAPTER VIII

STEADYING TO SHOT AND WING

SOON after the pheasant season closed in Ohio, I packed up again for some more quail shooting. Up to this time all of my efforts with Byrd had been bent chiefly upon the finding and pointing of game. From now on must occur the little refinements and the straightening out of inconsistencies in her work so as to turn her into a fully finished shooting dog. The first thing I noticed when we got back on quail was that she was "breaking shot" badly. She found and pointed her coveys in good shape, but the minute we would flush and shoot, away she would go like the wind after them. Of course, this was not to be tolerated. It can cause you a lot of trouble, especially when among scattered birds. Several times when we had birds scattered, and she would make a point, and on flush would

break shot and chase, it happened that her chasing accidentally flushed other birds out of range so that we did not get a shot. That is, her headlong flight carried her into other birds before she realized it, so intent was she upon those she was chasing. This very thing is one of the chief objections to a dog that is not steady to shot and wing—aside from the fact that it is undignified and not becoming to a thoroughly broken dog. A gentleman likes to have his shooting dog perfectly broken in all respects, and takes pride in that fact. He doesn't want a wild, irresponsible, rattle-brained idiot tearing indiscriminately about every time birds are raised. It is very ill-bred. But the real harm is done in the instances such as I have mentioned where it results in accidental flushing of other birds at which the hunter gets no shots.

Up to the time we started shooting pheasants over her, Byrd had been steady to shot and wing—it had been perfectly natural with her, after she had finally become steady on her points, to remain steady to both shot and wing. It occurred to me immediately

what now caused her unsteadiness. It was all brought about on that last day of pheasant shooting. We had encouraged her to start chasing wounded birds so quickly that it had spoiled her steadiness. A pheasant is so often brought out of the air and yet not stopped dead that she got to looking for all birds to start running the minute they hit the ground—and her line of thought was that the sooner she got started after them, the better. So far as the pheasants were concerned, it didn't matter so much, but it certainly was the wrong way to handle quail. In fact, I hadn't even noticed it on the pheasants and was rather surprised when I took her back on quail and saw her unsteadiness to shot and wing.

Now the way that is often the best to steady dogs down in this respect, is to put a check cord on them, and when they come to a point let them chase—and throw themselves when they reach the end of the cord. Once or twice of this will usually accomplish the desired result. A third lesson is but seldom required. As I have already explained, however, it was impossible to use a

check cord on Byrd with any satisfactory results. Consequently, it was a case of correcting her simply by persuasion. When I became assured after several trials that she was bound to chase each covey or single that arose, I called her to me and took her head between my hands and *made her look right straight into my eyes*; then I talked to her. That's one thing you must do when talking seriously to dogs. *Always make them look you right in the eyes.* Don't let them avoid you. This is just as important in talking to a dog as it is in talking seriously to a person. A dog may not understand every word that you use—but he will get a mighty big percentage of the fundamental idea. The eyes help to convey the intention.

Every time she pointed, and before shooting I would first say "Whoa" to Byrd and thus caution her to be careful and let her know in advance that I expected her to stick where she was. If you don't try to stop them until they've broken away, they're pretty apt to keep right on going heedless of your commands. In fact, in their excitement they very likely don't even hear you.

But if you get in your words of caution before they make the break it helps a lot, and often is all that is needed.

This soon accomplished the purpose desired in Byrd's case and she became as steady and nice as you please at all times. Of course I am inclined to believe (as every one believes about his children and his dogs) that my Irish Setter is somewhat above the ordinary—but I do also in all honesty believe that this lies largely in the *confidence* I have created in her and the *understanding* which has been brought about by the comradeship that exists between us. And I believe that any one else who starts out right by establishing a basis of *confidence* and *comradeship* with his dog will be able to accomplish results along the same lines that have worked out so well for me. Whenever Byrd, for instance, would chase a rabbit, I would call her to me and hold her head so that her eyes looked right into mine and then I would say, "Why, Byrdie, what do you mean, *what do you mean?* I thought you were a bird dog, not a hound. Let the beagles chase the rabbits, but you find the

birds.” The tone of my voice would indicate so surely my disappointment that she was invariably thereafter mighty careful not to give me cause for sorrow any more than she could possibly help. And it didn’t take long for her to ignore rabbits almost entirely. Of course Byrd by this time had reached the age when the chasing of rabbits was no longer to be looked upon lightly. Right here, in connection with rabbits, let me urge the novice not to be unduly worried at the interest your dog is bound to show in rabbits. The hunting dog is fundamentally as fond of fur as of feathers. Let your puppies chase rabbits to their hearts’ content. The development of the *hunting instinct* is the big main idea—not the ability to distinguish one kind of game from another. That can come later. *Keeness* is what you want above all else in a youngster, so don’t by any means dull his so-much-desired wire edge by restraining his natural eagerness to chase fur. Instead, you’d better be glad he’s so interested.

While on the subject of steadying to shot and wing, I will mention a scheme that I

believe has never before been made public property. It deals with the plan used by a prominent field-trial trainer. The first part is the same as usual—to fasten a check cord to the dog when on point. The handler's assistant then holds the other end of the cord, or else it can be tied to a stake driven in the ground. After the dog is thus secured, this trainer's plan is to rush by the dog and flush, making all the noise and excitement he can and firing as he flushes. That's how he gets his dogs to the point where he can take plenty of time after flushing birds and firing; and it also makes a dog steady before a field-trial crowd. After a while the dog gets so that all you have to do is to twitch at his collar as you go up, so that he thinks he is being fastened, and soon he will become so steady that even this is not necessary. This little method of refinement may come in handy some day and I am pleased to pass it on. It is authentic and should prove to be a really valuable tip in breaking a bird dog and making him absolutely steady to shot and wing.

And now, speaking of tips, here's another,

for which I am indebted to a friend from Kansas City, who says:

I am sending you herewith some of the kodaks just taken by a trainer who is specializing by handling only a limited string of shooting dogs.

I believe I told you about the 65-pound pointer bitch which he uses as an assistant instructor, and which he has trained to handle another dog coupled to her collar. He uses a choke collar on the pupil, when necessary, and has a short steel chain coupler, with a swivel in the center, and a swivel snap on each end to attach to collars. A pup inclined to be bird-shy, gun-shy, or not steady, is coupled to this big pointer, which is strong enough to hold almost any dog. The pup can't leave—has to stay and see the show, and a few lessons are all he needs before he becomes interested and works on his own initiative.

In the pictures, the larger bitch is the "instructor." The smaller one was gun-shy and bird-shy—had good range and speed, but used it only on rabbits. She is shown in the picture coupled to Queen, and later pointing and backing after five lessons from Queen, the instructor.

Returning now to the breaking of Byrd, that quail trip gave rise to another weak-

ness, besides breaking shot, that I had to figure out how to overcome before she could be considered as finished for an all-around shooting dog. For no conceivable reason at all, other than a feminine whim, she one day refused to retrieve a bird that I had shot. This provoked me, and I took her to the quail and picked it up and put it to her mouth and held it there, telling her to "Fetch." I was a little bit sharper with her than usual—and the net result was that I had just the devil's own time trying to get her to retrieve at all again. I fear I was a little hasty and became severe with her before making absolutely sure beyond all doubt that she understood exactly what it was she had done wrong. So she played safe by not retrieving at all, since it was that in connection with which she had got into trouble. This very situation brought out the one greatest evil likely to result from teaching to retrieve by any other than the force system. You have no way to compel obedience when it is not freely and voluntarily given; so I urge the reader particularly to be sure to teach force retrieving

carefully, using the McCullagh system outlined in an earlier chapter.

In the case of Byrd, however, she had too much fundamental good sense to do wrong continually, and the way I corrected this retrieving fault in her was by working her as much as possible with other dogs that were splendid retrievers; and it was not very difficult to make her jealous of the praise I gave the other dogs when they retrieved the birds. In order to get some of this praise herself, she one day ran to a dead quail and brought it back to me. From then on everything was all right again, because I immediately made it evident to her in every possible way how pleased I was. We understood each other—and to the date of this writing there have been no further failures to retrieve. I can only add that during her second season Byrd developed into an exceptionally efficient retriever, of quail in particular, and now has a record of much good work in this line to her credit.

CHAPTER IX

A LITTLE CANINE PSYCHOLOGY

JUST a little while ago I laid down the March, 1923, issue of the *American Magazine*, having finished a most entertaining article by Mr. Keene Sumner, reporting some of the chief theories of Larry Trimble on canine psychology and the training of dogs for the different duties they may be called upon to perform. It was Trimble who trained the now famous "Strongheart" to take the leading part in that splendid screen production, "The Silent Call." His theories so coincide with my own—and the basic fundamentals are so surely the same, whether it be breaking bird dogs for the field or shepherds for the screen—that I believe nothing I might say could have more value than just to requote some sayings of Mr. Trimble's from Keene Sumner's article. He says:



INSTRUCTOR AND PUPIL (FIRST LESSON)

Above (to the right) is shown the stanch big 65-pound pointer bitch referred to in the tip from Kansas City.



INSTRUCTOR AND PUPIL (LATER LESSONS)

The same bitch with her same pupil as shown above, but the pupil now being perfectly stanch herself and an enthusiastic worker.

You know, it's funny that human beings seem to forget that they are animals, too. Intellectually, we have gone far beyond other animals. We have learned to control our primitive impulses—but they are there, just the same.

A grown dog, like Strongheart, is very much like a child ten or twelve years old. He obeys some outside authority. He may do this through fear; or he may do it through respect, affection, and confidence. But the obedience that comes through fear is absolutely unreliable. A dog who is afraid of his master is like a child who is afraid of his parents; he obeys only so long as he is in danger of punishment. The first good chance he gets, he will follow his own impulses.

Of course, there is individuality among animals, just as there is among human beings. Strongheart, for instance, has an innate dignity and depth of feeling that are as fine as anything I have encountered in a human being. All animals have a greater sense of personal dignity than we give them credit for. I have seen people treat animals in a way that made me cringe, because I knew that the animal felt humiliated.

Never ridicule an animal. Never laugh at his mistakes. Never play practical jokes on him. Never put him in a position where he feels foolish and embarrassed. Play with him—yes, but always make it a mutual affair. Let him see that it is just as



much his fun as yours. Never sneer at him. If he doesn't understand you, and so does a thing wrongly, don't make him feel that he is a fool.

Never lie to an animal. Never fail to carry out your threats or your promises. There, again, you have a fundamental principle of human psychology. You cannot control an animal if he does not believe in you. Strongheart will do *anything* I tell him to because I never have betrayed his faith in me. Sometimes he will hesitate and look up at me, as if to say, "Did I understand you? Do you really mean what I thought you said?" When I repeat the command he seems to say, "Oh, you did mean it! That's all right. I just wanted to be sure."

Never teach an animal to depend on graft. I don't bribe an animal to do a thing. I don't give Strongheart a reward for carrying out a command; not a material reward, such as food. He does it solely because he wants my approval. He will look up at me questioningly, as if he said, "Was that what you wanted? Did I do it right?" If I smile and look pleased he fairly quivers with pleasure.

Of course you can get a kind of service out of either animals or human beings by bribing them—if you care for that kind of service. I don't! It isn't really good service, anyway. Strongheart will do more, just to *please* me, than I ever saw a dog do in order to get food. It is just the same with human

beings. They would starve, if it came to that, for some one they love supremely.

When Strongheart makes a mistake, I don't rail at him or strike him. I know he *meant* to do it right. He just didn't understand. When he sees, by my expression, that he has failed to satisfy me, his expression is almost tragic. It is up to me to show him where he was wrong. Kicking and cussing wouldn't *explain* it to him. He would be more confused than ever. Isn't that human psychology, too?

In those last sentences of Mr. Trimble's you have, I believe, one of the real essentials for the right sort of results in any kind of work with a dog. Mr. Trimble says that, except when it is absolutely necessary to be otherwise, Strongheart is always with him. The more you are with your dog, the greater the companionship developed between you, the greater will be the understanding and the love, and the greater the understanding and love between you, just so much greater will be the results that the dog gives you in what you are anxious for him to do. The interesting thing, to me, about the foregoing quotations is that my manuscript thus far

had been written before I had ever even heard of Mr. Trimble, and hence it is naturally with particular pleasure that I have read his utterances which so ably express my own ideas and beliefs.

Pursuing further the subject of psychology as applied to dogs, it has occurred to me that nothing would more fittingly complete this chapter than the following quotations from an article by my good friend G. H. Macdougall, published in the January, 1923, issue of a magazine of whose Dog Department I was at that time editor.

One often reads comments on the mysterious way animals convey information to each other. Of course, they have cries, the significance of some of which we readily understand. Who can mistake the meaning when an old hen shouts "Hawk!" But when a bunch of animals stampede, and another bunch at a distance follows suit, how do they make it unanimous? They do; every one knows that. The answer is pantomime. Actions speak louder than words. Pricked ears and intent posture in one make the rest look for the reason. Isn't there thought here that some way explains the action of pointing and backing in bird dogs?

I won't waste time arguing that animals reason. Certainly they do, about things that come within the circle of their cognizance, and just as well as we do. Our circle is larger, that is all the difference; enormously larger in the case of an educated, cultivated human mind—not so wonderfully different in that of a primitive savage.

Some years ago a friend called my attention to a magazine article about an investigation of the case of a clever dog which gave the answers to simple arithmetical problems by picking up a card with the proper number on it. This was a spaniel, trained by a lady of some prominence, socially, purely as an amusement. My friend told me the conclusion reached was that it was done by telepathy. I demurred, maintaining that pantomime must be the explanation. We got the magazine, and it proved that he had read the concluding paragraph carelessly, as one often does, and had missed the point. I was right.

This was an interesting case. The lady gave the dog no signal that she was aware of. She had no idea how he picked out the right card. Her connection with it, so far as she knew, was to give him a piece of cooky when he was right, and to say "Hurry up; hurry up"; when he hesitated. At such times he would bark impatiently, a circumstance indicating to me that he wanted the signal made plainer.

The lady was invited to come to Cornell University, which she did, making two visits of about a month each, and submitted to all the tests the Psychological Department could devise.

The numbered cards were strewn on a rug; the lady knelt at one side of it and the dog stood at the other. His average of correct answers was normally about eighty-five per cent or a little better, far, far above the possibilities of chance. After a little they put a low screen before her, hiding her hands and her body up to approximately the waist line. The dog's average of correctness fell at first, then slowly came back to nearly normal.

Then they used a higher screen, concealing all but her head and neck. His average fell way down, but improved somewhat, although it did not get back to much more than half his normal average. Restoring the lower screen, it jumped to about normal right away. Photographs were taken, even motion pictures, without avail, until one photo happened to show a little more plainly the very faint signal the dog was guided by—the slight involuntary movement of the lady's head and her fixed gaze toward the proper card. Once noticed, the same slight movement was detected in other photos.

Personally, I never saw an animal respond with any certainty to such a faint signal, though I judged a competition of trick dogs once and gave first prize

to a pointer dog that did the same trick. His signal was that his handler held one of the cards in his hand, as if from forgetfulness, and kept clicking the corner of it with his thumb-nail when the dog's head was near the desired card, stopping the click when he began to get "cold," as the children say in hide and seek. I nearly got licked by an excitable little Englishman, whose dog really knew three or four articles by name. I taught a dog this latter trick when I was a boy, and therefore knew just how difficult it was to teach one to refrain from picking up the wrong card, merely by ceasing this almost inaudible clicking.

Any spirited retriever will pick up any old thing with the greatest glee, given a chance, and can be taught the difference between a few articles. My dog knew five—hat, whip, handkerchief, key ring and coin.

I know well that my dogs take hints from my actions and attitudes, as they do from those of their kennel mates. I take advantage of this in the early stages of training. When teaching one to "Whoa," I stop myself; to drop, I squat down; to turn to hand, I run a few steps in the desired direction. If I stop suddenly in an attitude of attention, my dogs stop and half back me if close by; if a little way off they hustle back to see what I have found. If I carry my gun at the "ready," walking slowly, they

come in close and quarter carefully; if I throw it over my shoulder and strike out at my usual gait, they conclude that I was mistaken in supposing that birds were near and swing off at their usual hunting pace. They all do this, more or less, my old Babe more decidedly than any I ever owned.

Backing is an acknowledgment of the signal conveyed by the attitude of the pointing dog, sometimes aided by scent, if the backing dog happens to be in a position to get a faint whiff. Most dogs recognize the difference between the tense position of a true point and the lax attitude of one pointing old scent, or whose birds have run or flown. In the latter case they are inclined to crowd in and try the scent for themselves.

Old Babe never will back a strange dog or a puppy until he has made enough true points to convince her that he can be trusted. Until then she simply walks in and does it for herself. Always an independent little huzzy, she really prefers to do that anyway.

Pity they can't talk! Well, they can, and do, if one observes them closely enough; and if one makes a habit of responding to the gentle hints they give, they will talk more. The way to housebreak a dog is to watch very closely at first and let him out at the slightest indication of his desire. He will notice this in a few days and make the hint plainer.

CHAPTER X

FURTHER FACTS AND ANECDOTES

YOU will encounter all sorts of unusual experiences in work with a dog. There was, for instance, the day my wife 'phoned my office in great consternation and told me that Byrd had come home with a quail in her mouth which she had evidently caught herself! My poor wife didn't know whether she should take the bird away from the dog or not. While we were still discussing it, she suddenly announced that the little Setter had started to eat the quail—which performance she could see going on through the window.

That noon at the Club I mentioned the circumstance to a number of old timers present, and almost all of them expressed surprise that I was not more worried over the affair. Regardless of their opinions, however, I couldn't be convinced that it was so ter-

rible—so, in order to back up the position I had taken, I wrote to my good friend “Uncle Mac” out at Spokane. I knew that whatever he might say would be correct—and that he would be equally frank whether he agreed with me or not. Here is his reply verbatim:

The little bitch did exactly right to eat the quail. What else would you have her do with a nice morsel like that and no one to tell her Nay? No dogs really have any morals about food. You may teach them not to help themselves when you are looking, but the best of them are apt to forget, just like a child, if something good is left within their reach and no one by to caution them. I once had a lovely little greyhound bitch, mild and sweet and absolutely well behaved, except that she would swipe anything to eat if she got a chance. Every once in a while she could not resist temptation with respect to food. In every other way she was a perfect lady. Once my wife had set some chops on a platter, ready to put on the table, on the front of the stove to keep them warm a minute while she dished the vegetables or something. She had scarcely turned her back when Fannie quickly licked the platter clean. The Missus was mad for a minute, then said, “Well, poor Fannie, she can’t help it.”

I have often given puppies quail heads to eat, to make them "birdy" and keen to hunt, and I have never yet had any permanent ill effects from this practice. Quite to the contrary, in fact.

You will be very much more fortunate than some of us if your young bird dog shows no inclination to kill chickens. Yet it goes without saying that the finished dog must be taught to let all poultry severely alone—or else you will be given many causes for worry, or worse, for most farmers have chickens, and a hunter's dog must not molest them. I had some experience with Byrd in the matter of chickens when she was quite young. It came to a head when she actually killed a chicken and was caught in the act—thus convincing me that she had killed several of which I had been suspicious.

I took the chicken she had killed and tied it to her neck so securely that she could not possibly get it off. I used a stout cord and wound it tightly about both the chicken and her collar. Never was a dog so humiliated. It proved a very severe punishment for one

of her delicate sensibilities. She could not get rid of the now loathsome chicken and I put her in the kennel and just left it with her. She wouldn't eat or drink while the chicken was rotting right on her neck. Her punishment was a trifle hard, but there is no doubting it was a kindness in disguise, for as a chicken killer she surely would have come to grief—but from that day to this, Byrd has never bothered a chicken again to my knowledge. Recently, however, I had a sad experience when she killed a couple of ducks on a farm where I had been permitted to hunt. Some dogs that are absolutely safe with chickens never do get accustomed to ducks—there seems to be a greater temptation to the latter which is almost impossible to overcome.

Not long ago I had a letter from one of my readers about a chicken-killing pup. He lived on a farm and his puppy killed his chickens at every chance. He said he had tried tying the dead chicken to the dog, but without avail. He asked me to suggest something better, and I replied that I could not. The last letter I got from him he said

he had decided to solve the problem by getting rid of the chickens.

In breaking a bird dog—or in fact in any other sort of work with a dog—you will every now and then be startled by circumstances that prove the truth of my oft-repeated assertion that “They think too.” Circumstances make such a difference in how dogs act. For instance, there was the Sunday afternoon when I was all dressed up like a new church with no place to go, and took a stroll over the County Club Golf Course. Byrd went along, as she usually did. It was a very cold January day and no golf was being played. All of a sudden the little dog lifted that wonderful nose of hers and took a whiff at the atmosphere. A few minutes later she froze on point.

It didn't appear to be a likely place for birds, so close to the golf course, and not very good cover either, so I didn't pay much attention to her. I thought she was probably pointing half in play, and started to walk right on without recognition of her stand. My surprise can better be imagined than

described when she immediately left the point and ran forward a few feet, flushing as big a bunch of birds as I have ever seen. But even worse—she gave chase as if she would run them clear out of the county! I had a terribly hard time getting her in and under control. I realized I was partly to blame. Furthermore, you can't expect an old head on young shoulders. Nevertheless, here was a matter that needed the firm hand of discipline. Her little fun was all right if she didn't carry it too far.

I took her over to where I had seen one of the singles drop, and the little devil ran into that quail and flushed it exactly the same way that she had the covey. This time I secured a switch and punished her good and severely. She had been so deliberately lawless that there was nothing else to do. She knew better—and she simply ran wild, ignoring my commands as well as my pleadings. In a case like that you haven't much of an alternative—but that doesn't mean that you must hurt a dog severely. A whipping and a beating are two different things. On occasion, one is permissible—

the other, never. I can only add that the fellow who takes me too literally may miss my meaning. I make this explanation because in my former edition I was misunderstood by some who formed the impression that I believe in "babying" dogs and being "soft" with them. Such could not be further from my thoughts.

I switched Byrd quite actively. She was so excited, however, that it didn't affect her much. I took hold of her head, and shook her to bring her to her senses and get her attention. Then I held her head while I looked right into her eyes and talked to her. Had any one heard me he would have been reminded of John Taintor Foote's story entitled *Shame On You*, wherein the old Southern darky jockey overcame the tendency of his favorite race horse to break, by making him stand up all night long while the darky simply repeated over and over and over again the three words, "Shame on you." That's about the same way I talked to the little dog that day.

As we are studying the subject of breaking a bird dog, however, suppose we just

stop a minute and analyze that situation. Consider these facts: We were on the golf course, where she had not been accustomed to find birds. She had never known of my attempting to find birds in that location. Furthermore, as I have already said, I was dressed up in my Sunday-go-to-meetin' duds, and wasn't out looking for birds—*and she knew it*. In the next place, I had no gun nor any sort of weapon with me to have got the birds if she had held them. Don't ever think for a minute that the little dog didn't take all this into consideration. In the light of later events, I am sure of it. I am convinced that the chief reason she flushed those birds was that she thought it wouldn't make any difference in the circumstances which I have mentioned. This thought was strengthened in her mind (almost justified, I have since come to think) when I paid absolutely no heed to her point and kept walking right along without giving the work any sort of recognition. So she simply thought she might as well have some fun.

I was relating this experience one day to Mr. Nicholas Daniel, with whom it has been

my pleasure and profit to spend a great many doggie hours. He immediately told me of an experience he witnessed once when he was one of the judges at a certain field trial down south. The circumstances were not similar—except that both show, “They think too.” On this occasion Spot’s Rip Rap was sweeping all opposition before him by such a wide margin that only the most flagrant of errors at the eleventh hour could keep him from winning. The judges simply couldn’t decide against him unless he should end up by doing something absolutely unforgiveable. Yet that is exactly what he did! He came to a beautiful and sensational point on the side of a hill opposite to where the judges and spectators all stood—thus staging a most spectacular possibility as a fitting conclusion to what had been a perfect performance. In bold relief Spot’s Rip Rap stood out against the sky line—a magnificent statue standing his birds. Then, all of a sudden, without a word of warning, he jumped in and deliberately flushed them!

That evening Spot’s handler went to Mr.

Daniel and said: "Well, it's all over—but I do want to tell you how that thing happened, for I know exactly why Spot's Rip Rap flushed those birds. Last night I had occasion to punish him and will admit that I was possibly a little bit oversevere. He has been mad about it ever since and just got even with me to-day by kicking the prize money higher than a kite after he had already won it! If the beggar only hadn't done so well first, it wouldn't seem quite so bad—he sure did a good job of getting even, I must confess."

A somewhat similar experience is related by A. F. Hochwalt in his book, *The Modern Pointer*, on page 100 of which valuable publication he discusses a like circumstance in connection with the famous pointer Fishel's Frank. Quoting verbatim from Mr. Hochwalt's record, we learn the following:

The four dogs called back into the second series were braced to run as follows: Fishel's Frank with Pretty Peggy; Miss Ransom with Cæsar. The night before the running of the finals the order was posted that the dogs were to be at the starting place at seven

TABLE TO FIND DAY OF WHELPING

Date of Service in Light Figures. Date of Whelping when due in Bold Figures under the
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Jan.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31
Mar.	5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 Apr 1 2 3 4
Feb.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31
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May	3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 Jun 1 2
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The above chart is reproduced by courtesy of Mr. Nicholas Daniel.

o'clock. At a few minutes after that hour the first brace was cast off. Fishel's Frank went away with his usual snap and dash and for a few minutes he looked very good to those who were in the gallery as spectators as he flitted far out on the horizon line. He skirted the edge of a stubble field, leaped a fence into pasture and made for a skirting of woods on the left; suddenly he threw his head up, turned and caught the scent of quail. For one moment he stopped in order to make it out and then he roaded up to the edge of the forest and stiffened into one of his characteristic attitudes. Jack Gude called point and rode up to his dog slowly; he seemed to have unbounded confidence in his stanchness. He dismounted thirty yards away, walked up to him and was about to flush, when the judges ordered him to shoot. Going back to his horse to get the gun out of the scabbard, he made a few jesting remarks to some of the spectators, but still his confidence was unshaken. Just as Gude took the gun down and turned toward the dog, Frank bounded forward, put up the bevy and chased it into the woods! His every action seemed to say: "If you think this is a jest, I'll be a party to it." Never was handler more surprised; never did a laugh go up among the spectators like on that occasion, for notwithstanding the seriousness of it all to Gude, who thus saw the money get away from under his very eyes, he, too,

joined in the laugh which went up at his expense. That is how Fishel's Frank lost a place in the all-age stake of the Ohio trials of 1906.

When you consider the case of Fishel's Frank just mentioned; and that of Spot's Rip Rap as related by Mr. Daniel; and of how Smada Byrd flushed that covey on the golf course—you will realize something of the truth I have been trying to drive home: namely, that a dog must be given credit for the great amount of intelligence that most of them have, if you would hope to accomplish the best results in training them. The trainer who does not govern his efforts by a knowledge of these things and the proper consideration thereof—will surely fail.

One of the worst faults of many amateurs is constantly nagging at a dog. I have often been in the field with fellows who are forever coaching or calling to their dogs and just naturally nagging the life out of them all the time. I cannot adequately express how ridiculous and hopeless are such silly efforts—words fail me. Suffice it to say it is just exactly the way *not* to get the best out of any dog.

CHAPTER XI

FINISHING TOUCHES

TRULY, you will find breaking a bird dog a most fascinating study with never a dull moment and always some problem to be solved. There was, for instance, the day when little Byrd came up behind Old Ned and found him on point. This was toward the latter part of February and the first time she had been afield with "her old master" for some time. Imagine my surprise when, after backing for a few seconds, the little bitch started to pull ahead of the stanch and steady pointer. I was naturally furious and spoke to her quite harshly.

But, there was another tale to tell when no birds flushed! Then, quite some little distance ahead, Byrd came to a stand and we found the birds in front of her when we stepped forward to flush. She had as much

as said: "Ned, old fellow, they've gone on—let's go get 'em." It was a breach of good manners for her to belittle the other dog's point even after she had tested the situation for herself—yet it *did* make it hard to punish or scold her for locating the birds that Ned had not yet quite nailed. All such things must be taken into consideration—you must be fair to your dog—else there will be a loss of confidence that may cost you dearly. Punishment in a case like that, unless mighty carefully and correctly administered, would be about as easy a way as any to make a dog a blinker.

So many people are too hard and fast in their rules. They think a thing should be done a certain way and so they blindly adhere to policies, based upon arbitrary precedent, that fail utterly to be tempered by a consideration of conditions at hand. A rule of thumb policy will not give you as broad gauged a dog—not one so apt to rise to the occasion and meet new emergencies as they arise in the work. I always try to figure out each case and invariably give the dog the benefit of any doubt. Then, if they

unquestionably need punishment, I give it to them. I very seldom punish a young dog in the early stages of training. An older dog *must* be punished if he does wrong deliberately when he knows better. My dogs suffer almost as much from the mere thought of a whipping as from the whipping itself—because they are so anxious to please; because they really want to do right. My rule is that a good, severe talk always precedes the whip and then the latter is very effective even though not too harshly administered. Do I hear any one call this “slush”? If so, let him come around with a dog that will do anything I can’t make mine do both easier and better, and I’ll listen to him. Otherwise not. And this goes. It is both a threat and a promise.

I work Byrd regularly at least twice each week and it is the most fascinating recreation imaginable. You can make quite a game of it if you take a kodak along and try with it to record all unusual or striking poses or situations. The fact that it is not easy to get what you want but adds to the interest. There was, for instance, that

never-to-be-forgotten day when Byrd beat Ned to the birds in a most sensational find—and then that perfectly beautiful piece of work as the keen-nosed little Setter roaded the covey the entire length of the field, backed every inch of the way by the magnificent Pointer. As stanch as a statue and true as steel, he kept well behind her, and, as a gentleman should, honored her work—not once even so much as attempting to rob her in any way of the full credit. Honest to the last drop of his blood—an aristocrat every inch—as I watched Old Ned that day the thought surged through me how truly most of us should feel humbled in the presence of such splendid dogs, before which we should bow down our heads in unfeigned humility. Yet the day just recorded I had left the kodak behind!

These kodak trips will give your dog lots of work—so necessary to successful results—and will take you out-of-doors into the open air, and the invigorating exercise will fill you with health. You can't expect to work a dog for only a month or so out of twelve and hope to own as thoroughly de-

veloped a shooting companion as if you give him enough work to keep him tuned up to it. You should work your dog afield from September through March—not burdensomely, but at least every once in a while. It makes wonderful recreation to take your dog for a stroll where you know there are birds, and work him on them. What fun it is to seek for game—then find it! To match your wits and your dog's judgment and nose against the wary birds seeking to avoid you—and finally, having stood the test, to be rewarded for all your efforts by that ever thrilling picture of a pretty point. What matters it if you kill or not—except just enough so that the dog doesn't forget what it's all about. I have almost as much fun just working my dogs out of season as I do shooting over them when the law permits—not quite as much fun, of course, but enough to make it amply worth while. Certainly there is plenty of thrill when quail take to wing! And when it comes to pheasants—man alive! We had Byrd out just yesterday getting “oiled up” on them and words fail me to describe the fun. You sportsmen, whose

days afield with a dog are limited to the comparatively few days of open season, little realize what you are missing. Breaking your own bird dog, if spread out over about eight months out of the twelve, as it should be, will give you just a world of wonderful pleasure—and in the end a shooting dog that will please you better and be the source of more pride than you will ever experience with a dog broken for you by some outside trainer. And if you don't keep your good dog tuned up, don't blame him if he goes stale.

I recommend the long, slow development, because I do not believe you can or should try to crowd a dog's schooling into a few short weeks—any more than you would the education of a child. We are prone to expect too much of a dog and are seldom prepared to make proper allowances. I have found that the less people know about dogs the more apt they are to fail in their appreciation of limitations. Consequently such people never receive from a dog anything approaching his full capacity for service. These splendid creatures are wonderful

enough just as they are without the impossible being expected of them.

In teaching a dog to do anything whatsoever, I have always got the best results by carrying on the training in connection with the *actual need*. Of course this method presupposes that you already have your dog in control and amenable to your wishes; and on a sufficiently friendly basis with you so that the understanding of the thing you desire is not an impossible matter. I have never been a very good advocate of teaching a dog to do something just to be doing it. I have an idea that a good dog realizes that such training is very largely a mere matter of horseplay—he doesn't get the reason for it—and I think he doesn't enter into it quite as satisfactorily as if conditions are such that he naturally can understand that there is a very definite and reasonable object in what you ask him to do. Now don't all laugh at once. I know that a great many readers will say that this is giving the dog credit for more wisdom than he really has. The only thing I can say is that those of you who laugh, had better laugh at long range—for

if you are close enough to Dayton to want to see the opposite proved true, my dogs are a living example of the fact that my methods *will* produce results. Allow me to add that I have but little doubt that many people will not be able to accomplish results along just the lines I do—but in nine cases out of ten, that will be their fault and not the fault of their dogs. My methods will produce remarkable results *if the master is equal to doing his part along the lines this book suggests.*

But theories and generalities are cheap, and only specific cases count, so permit me to be specific and illustrate my point by telling exactly how I taught Smada Byrd to stay where I tell her to stay until I give her permission to leave.

I didn't bother with her on this point until occasion arose when it would be a real service to me for her to do this thing.

My property adjoins the Dayton Country Club and I find it very refreshing during the summer months to stop by there for a shower before dinner in the evening on my way home from the office. One day I

happened to have Byrd with me in town and decided that I would like to have a shower, but was a little late getting started home and didn't have any time to spare. I decided that this would be a good opportunity to give her a little instruction. I took her with me into the locker room, and, when I was ready for the shower, I pushed her to the floor by the chair where I had placed my clothes and then, while I held my hand on her back to keep her down, I quietly but firmly repeated the instruction: "Lie down—stay there." When I had given her this order several times so that I felt reasonably sure she would do as instructed, unless her attention was diverted, I started for the shower; but I asked a friend of mine who was there to watch her out of the corner of his eye and give me the signal quickly if she should start to leave. I had just begun to run the water when he called to me that he believed she was getting ready to move from her post—and so I immediately left the shower and caught her in the very act of starting away. I then again pressed her to the floor and repeated the same commands

that I had given previously. The whole situation—coupled with the fact that she concluded I must have an all-seeing eye—worked splendidly and this time she stayed exactly where I told her until I returned. Even then she did not try to get up until I gave her permission to do so.

The next time I had occasion to ask Byrd to stay where put was one evening when I had been invited to give a little talk before a group of Boy Scouts. They made a big fire in the open grate of the cabin on their reservation and gathered around the fire to listen to my remarks. I had taken Byrd with me but it was manifest that I did not want to be interrupted by her during the program. The next situation was that there were some crullers and sandwiches about on the tables for the benefit of the boys and naturally I did not want her, by any chance, to cause an interruption by attempting to get any of these. I therefore took her to the place where I wanted her to lie and gave her the same instruction as I had done some time previously at the Country Club.

I didn't have a bit of trouble and she

didn't even attempt to leave her place until I was through with what I had to say and gave her permission to do so. Since that time I have had a number of occasions when I have had to ask Byrd to wait some place for me—and not once has she failed.

It is my belief that I was benefited in giving these instructions by the fact that the *need* for her to do as I told her was manifest. The results, as secured, would seem to justify my belief—because, with but very little effort, I have accomplished more than most people are ever able to do as a result of almost constant effort to keep their dogs up to the mark. I might have asked Byrd to do these things innumerable times for “practice”—but the trouble with so much mere practice is that the dog is apt to regard it pretty much as poppycock and not take it so seriously as if you handle such situations as I tried to do. Just let it be remembered, however, that what I have accomplished must not be considered as rather extemporaneous any more than any fundamentally good speech is ever extemporaneous. The foundation had already been laid and

the way prepared by months of companionship with my dog, so that she was ready when the time came to respond in the way I wanted her to do.

After all, the whole proposition just gets right back to my idea that it is *companionship* and *confidence* that will accomplish the purpose you seek—more than any deep secret or mysterious power or special knowledge of set rules how to secure a given result. Don't think of the rule book when confronted by some problem with your dog. Use your own judgment and place your faith in his friendship—and it's pretty apt to be more your fault than his if he fails you. Love, backed by plain common sense and good judgment, will do more than anything else in the world. If you get a well-bred dog, from parents that have been real bird dogs, you have the natural instincts pretty well developed. And if you haven't such a specimen to start with, it is often cheaper and better to get a new dog rather than spend too much time and money on one that may never be worth his feed. This is not always true, of course, but as a rule is pretty

apt to work out. On the other hand, some dogs—just as some people—are merely slower in developing and often don't really "come to themselves" until later in life. I have found that the cheapest dogs are usually the most expensive; and I have seen so many people fall victims of the delusion of picking out a good one for a small price. What a pity!

Lytle's Hoosier Spot, the exceptional Pointer bitch that we now work regularly as a brace mate with Byrd, required almost no training at all. She just took to it as naturally as a duck to water. From the very first she went wide. She is industrious and has always been stanch on point as well as steady to shot and wing—yet she has never even needed a check cord. But, of course, she is phenomenal. Almost the only training Spot ever needed was in the matter of distinguishing game—she would at first point anything from snakes to rabbits and she was as stanch on fur as on feather. As soon as a few birds had been killed over her, however, she was almost perfectly broken.

Yes, some dogs "break" more easily than



LYTLE'S HOOSIER SPOT POINTING A SINGLE

Spot is younger than Byrd—lacking two months of being a year old at the time this picture was taken. She is fast, wide and stylish, both in her work and on her game. Furthermore, she has "bird sense" with something to spare.

others. Some, like Spot, need almost no breaking at all, only finishing and refining. Don't be misled into the belief that there is something mysterious or uncanny about breaking a bird dog. There is not. There are exceptions, of course, but if you just go along with a dog, following somewhat the lines I practiced with Smada Byrd, as described in this book, and then if the dog does not respond properly, it will be a pretty safe bet that the chances are the best thing to do would be to try another dog. It may happen that you have one of the exceptions that it really requires a professional to handle—a dog that is somewhat beyond the abilities of an ordinary amateur to break. In that case the most satisfactory thing for you to do is to get another dog as the subject for your efforts; for it is an assured fact that the right sort of bird dogs will respond to constant companionship and love which have bred understanding and a desire to do the right thing, coupled with an abiding faith and confidence in the master who guides them.

Cosmopolitan magazine used to publish a

little loose-leaf house organ called *The Better Way* which is remarkable for its splendidly put conclusions. It is written by Maxwell I. Pitkin, whose command of English is second only to his power of expression and art for writing. The following is quoted from the issue of February 10, 1923:

One day in late December a wealthy banker entered a fashionable jewelry shop on Fifth Avenue, and went directly to the diamond counter.

The clerk in charge, at his request, brought out a large tray of unset stones, and proceeded to recount the carat, value and history of each jewel.

Presently the banker's interest centered on a large blue-white Jaeger, exquisitely cut and gleaming like a spark of fire. But the price seemed prohibitive, and, though the clerk labored faithfully enough to make the sale, the banker was about to turn away.

Just then *he* came along—the man who employed the clerk—and asked for a word in the conversation.

He, too, talked diamonds—that was all. But he did it—well, reverently. He held the stone to the light, that the banker might look far into its crystal depths. He shadowed it in his palm, revealing new flashes of blue and red and green. He told the regal story of its travels and adventures. He talked of diamonds as he knew them.

The banker bought the stone.

"Why was it," he asked of the jeweler, "that you were able to sell me that stone after your clerk had failed?"

"Because," the jeweler replied quietly, "while my clerk understands diamonds, *I love them.*"

I have quoted the foregoing anecdote completely verbatim, for the reason that it gives expression, I believe, better than I could do it, to the one great fundamental in breaking a bird dog, which it has been my desire and my hope to drive home in this book. Instead of a diamond, the subject might just as well have been a dog—and the concluding question and statement changed merely to something such as the following:

"Why was it," he asked, "that you were able to break that dog after your trainer had failed?"

"Because," the master replied quietly, "while my trainer *understands* dogs, *I love them.*"

Perhaps I have said enough. I believe I have. Let us, therefore, merely sum up the definite duties of the broken bird dog.

1. He must have the hunting instinct and

desire to range wide to hunt for birds; and with age and experience must come what we call "bird sense," which is merely the matter of using sound, good judgment as to the best locations, the most likely birdy spots, in the territory hunted. (*Development along these lines depends upon natural inclination plus plenty of opportunity to hunt.*)

2. On finding the desired game (and you can easily make it clear to a dog what is and what is not to be hunted) the dog must point stanchly and dependably. (*The modern bird dog either points naturally or is taught to do so with comparative ease—while stanchness and dependability grow greater with age and experience.*)

3. Your dog must be steady to shot and wing. (*This is not natural, as the inclination is usually to chase when game is flushed. But the check cord or some method must be used to bring a dog to positive steadiness to shot and wing. This is one of the most important of the artificial phases of training.*)

4. The truly finished dog will retrieve. (*Sometimes to do this comes naturally With*



IN BLACK AND WHITE

One of the most enthusiastic setter breeders of to-day is Mr. G. F. Mosher, of Kansas City, owner of the famous "Gunner," as well as Lad Rodney and Momoney's Joe. Above is shown two of Lad Rodney's puppies with their nurse. ("In Black and White" is the title Mr. Mosher gives this picture.)



TWO SETTER PUPPIES POINTING AT AN EARLY AGE

These puppies have inherited birdy characteristics from a long line of splendid ancestry.

others it must be taught. The force system is to be recommended except where natural retrieving is unquestionably true and dependable—as it is developed to such a high degree in some of the Spaniels. But the force system is usually by far the most satisfactory.)

5. The foregoing are the fundamental essentials in the working dog. Backing—that is, honoring the point of another dog—and a number of little refinements that go to make the truly high-class field companion and helper depend upon the particular dog's own natural ability cultivated by a master who understands him thoroughly. (*In the April, 1923, issue of the "American Magazine" there is an article by Samuel A. Derieux, in which he tells of a dog he once owned that would go out very wide to find birds, then back away from them and find his master and lead him (Mr. Derieux) to the covey which Buck would again promptly point. Such development as this is, however, strikingly outstanding.*)

I have just finished reading a story entitled "The Red Queen," by T. von Zie-kursch, in the February 20, 1923, issue of the

Popular Magazine. It is a splendid bird-dog story with an Irish Setter as the heroine and from it I have taken three short, but mighty sentences, which I have chosen as the most fitting possible thought to leave with you in ending this chapter, which concludes my message in this book, so far as training is concerned—the other chapters that follow not bearing directly upon this subject. Mr. von Ziekursch says: “To the really great bird dog the art of the hunt comes naturally and by instinct. Man has taught the mightiest champions of the field very, very little. Few have been injured by insufficient tutoring—but many have been injured by too much.”

Rev. William Bulloch, of Harrison, New York, has very kindly given permission to reprint his poem “Loskin Ben” from a recent issue of the *American Field*:

LOSKIN BEN

Your feet scarce seem to touch the ground,
As with a lightsome joyous bound
You spring to where the birds are found,
Fleet-footed Ben.

A setter of a famous race,
Of dogs that well could show the pace,
That won in many a hard-fought race,
 Is my young Ben.

Your sire knew too much to stay
And throw his precious time away
Where wily quail would never stray,
 Just to please men.

But scorning all the bare green field
He knew no crafty bird concealed,
He sought the cover that would yield
 The hidden game.

And from your dam, my gallant boy,
Comes rich blue blood without alloy,
The blood that's been the sportsman's joy
 Since Gladstone came.

Your grandsire, gallant Eugene M,
Has handed down a worthy name,
'Though some would be inclined to blame
 His urge alone.

But when you flit among the trees,
Or speeding up against the breeze,
You catch the scent and sudden freeze
 As stiff as stone,

I know that of a noble race,
A scion, you will fill your place
And many a happy day you'll grace,
 My bonnie Ben.

CHAPTER XII

THINGS TO BEWARE OF

ONE of the worst evils in any way connected with dogs—and one that all who are sincerely interested in these wonderful creatures should fight to the last ditch—is the unscrupulous buyer as well as the unscrupulous breeder and trainer. I don't know which is the worst. It is probably a case of jumbling them together in the same bag and either one that comes out first can be picked for winners as “worst of all breeds.”

The proposition of a trainer taking money for a service supposed to be rendered and then merely carrying the dog along as a “crate warmer,” is such a deplorable situation that I sometimes almost feel as if the battle should be fought with gun and sword. The worst part of it all, it seems to me, is the fact that the dog is such a noble creature

himself—that it is a crime he should be debased by animals so much his inferiors as some men!

Some of the proudest documents in my possession are letters from people whom I have been able to help somewhat after they have become involved with dishonest breeders and trainers. By bringing a little pressure to bear—by threatening in some cases and pleading in others—by coaxing and commands—I have in several instances been able to help those who have been suffering helplessly as the result of some dog deal. Just recently in two instances—one in Michigan and the other in Wisconsin—I was able, by a little diplomatic persuasion, to induce breeders to deliver dogs that had been ordered and paid for some months earlier, and which, it was very clear, they never had intended to do. It has been only by the greatest good fortune that in several such instances I have been able to aid the purchasers—doubly so that often I have been successful in getting a good specimen and not merely some old scrub.

But I will not waste your time or mine

discussing this subject in unnecessary detail beyond the province of this book. Old dog men well know of it, and the new ones will simply have to take my word and avoid trouble as best they can from such meager advice as it is possible to give. Don't ever send your dog to any trainer until you are absolutely certain that he is thoroughly reliable. Investigate him from every possible angle before risking such a valuable creature as a good bird dog in his hands. And never buy a dog unless you have proved absolutely that the reputation of the seller is above reproach. Why, you can't always count on getting even the correct stud service unless you accompany the dog and are yourself an eyewitness of the event.

The silliest part of the whole business is that there isn't even any manner of sense to it—not to mention its injustice from a moral standpoint. Crookedness is simply an evidence of ignorance. For who of us is in business for only a day! No one—whether he be in the dog business or the composing of ditties—can get anywhere unless he pleases his public. And what's the use of trying to

do anything unless you do get somewhere with it? There's no use being in any kind of a business unless it repeats—it's too expensive always developing new customers. Profit can come only from the constant repeat business of old customers—that is, speaking of profit in its bigger, broader sense. Little profits aren't worth the bother of picking. Why, then, should a trainer of bird dogs think it smart to carry more dogs to the prairies or anywhere else than it is possible actually to train? What does it profit him, if he can never resell the same sucker twice? There's really no profit in trying to trade on the old exploded theory that "there's a new sucker born every minute." It is vastly cheaper—and in the end much more profitable—to take less dogs to train and give each more attention, thus giving value received, the same as is done in any legitimate business, and so please the people who own the dogs that they will send others to you year after year, and by word of mouth boost you until you are so busy you will have to boost your rates, just as other professional people must do, and yet

have customers want to come to you anyway even at the higher rates, because they know they will always get value received for their money—that you are not one of the kind who thrives on the basis of constant change of customers, necessitated through a “crate-warmer” basis of doing business. The honest method may not pay so well the first season—but in the long run the trainer who builds up his business on that basis will have money in his pocket when the other guys are broke.

The following letter was received recently in the course of a busy day from an old trainer of over twenty years' experience—a man who is a credit to his profession. The pity is that he is able to put the shoe on the other foot and show how unscrupulous are many buyers. He says:

As for training, I think I have advertised for dogs three different times in my life. I am past the advertising stage so far as training is concerned.

In twenty years of playing the dog game I have had only one dissatisfied customer, and that one changed his mind regarding the pup in question when I offered to refund his money for return of the

pup. He was a breeder of Gordon Setters, the biggest type I ever saw, and he was judging English Setters by the Gordon standard.

There are many crooked dog dealers, no doubt, but they have nothing on some of these rich Jaspers at that. I know of one who used to have a large hunting lodge and who would advertise for shooting dogs, demanding the highest-class dogs, willing to pay any price, but the dog must come on approval, preferably thirty days. Every season he and his guests shot over crack dogs, and if he ever bought one, no one ever found it out. All he was out was express charges, and the poor breeder was out of luck.

I am one who is for the betterment of the grand game all the way around—it's too splendid to let a few crooks spoil it, whether they be breeders or buyers, and I'm for your honor idea strong.

In another letter the same trainer says:

I have certainly seen plenty of crooked dog men and, because there are more of them in total anyhow, there are more crooked buyers than there are crooked breeders. But what show has a dog man against a man who belongs to half a dozen clubs and takes his friends out on personally conducted shooting trips? A trainer is certainly up against it

in the case of this type of customer when he raises a howl because you have not finished a gun-shy dog in two months, and made a perfect shooting dog of him in that time. They often expect you to do this even though it would be the work of a master to turn the dog out finished in seven months at the least.

Speaking for myself, I know of a number of instances of deplorably unscrupulous owners. In one case a nice little bitch was sent for training. The trainer should have had her about six months, but was limited to sixty days. When she reached him the little bitch was found to be in season—surely not his fault. Yet she could not be worked during that period; and when the owner ordered her home for the shooting season she had not yet been steadied to game. The trainer justly asked for his pay before shipping the dog, and received a wire saying a check was in the mails. The dog was at once shipped—but the check never came to hand, and hasn't yet.

If we owners would all only realize that dogs will get sick, and will die—for us as well as for trainers—I am sure we would have more sympathy and patience with

handlers. Furthermore, if more of you knew, as I do, that to break a dog right is worth \$50 a month of any man's money we wouldn't be expecting quite so much for the measly \$30 or less that we now pay.

I would like to see every reader of this book consider himself a committee of one to fight all crookedness in dog dealings to the last ditch—to its eventual death. We can accomplish much if we but set our hearts and our minds to it. There are many splendid examples of honest trainers that it should be an inspiration for others to follow and it is our duty to help these to succeed, just as much as it is our duty to do all in our power to destroy the others.

It is refreshing now to speak from the opposite standpoint and consider how many magnificent characters there are who have been pillars of strength and a credit to the fancy. Those who are of the contrary type probably stand out in more prominent relief than would be the case but for the outstanding contrast. Let those of us who are to carry the banner forward draw inspiration from the best examples of the past and let

them guide our footsteps right. Men who really love dogs could not do otherwise—the truth that shines from their loving eyes is so uncalculating, so honest, so sincere, so big, and so bold and so straightforward that even the mere thought of deception of any kind should be banished from our minds.

For the man who loves the out-of-doors nothing is more fascinating than breaking a bird dog; and nothing gives a hunter so much satisfaction as to shoot over a dog that he has broken himself.

The only reason I have written this book is because I have felt that some of my suggestions may be helpful, particularly from the standpoint of dog psychology—so essential for successful results. Other works have given devices in more detail—mine aims more at the matter of the *mind*. That one phase of the subject is a big enough task for any one book. If I shall have succeeded merely in causing you to realize what an important part of the problem this matter is—the closest possible meeting of minds, yours with your dog's—then I shall feel that I have not failed.



SMADA BYRD AND HOOSIER SPOT

The prettiest picture an artist could paint—an honest honoring of a find by her brace-mate, the splendid Setter paying tribute to the spectacular point of the whirlwind, Lytle's Hoosier Spot. Needless to say, the Setter backing is Smada Byrd.

CHAPTER XIII

“SONG BIRDS” AND THE FARMER

I CANNOT pass over this opportunity to say something about the relationship between the hunter and the farmer—so all important is this matter, and so surely does it seem to have a place in a book such as this which is to be read by bird-dog men who are so intimately affected thereby either for weal or woe.

It is fundamental for us to realize that although the state can give us a license to hunt it can go no further. The state cannot give us the right to shoot on any man's property. Hunters, therefore, are dependent upon the courtesy of the farmers for the right to enjoy the privilege of the shooting license as granted by the state. A hunter has no inherent right to shoot upon another man's land. Let's get that firmly fixed in our minds right in the very beginning and

have no uncertainty about it. The sooner we get that into our heads, the better position we will be in as to the solution of the future.

Where do we get the arrogant attitude that many would-be hunters are wont to assume? Possibly I should say where *did* we get this attitude in the past? I use the past tense, for, so far as I can see, the hunter of to-day is increasingly respectful of the rights of others. Yet while this may be true—it is certainly to be regretted that the tendency is coming so late.

On the other hand, where do some farmers get the mistaken idea that game is private property! The following, quoted from the November 3, 1923, issue of *National Stockman and Farmer*, will show that such is not the case:

Since most of the early Americans came from England the language, customs and laws of that country naturally prevailed in the New World. There were a few exceptions because the colonists did not approve all English customs or laws. One of these exceptions was the ownership of game. In England the owner of the land owned the game, and since

the country was made up largely of great estates a few persons controlled the privilege of hunting and fishing. The colonists took care to provide that no such monopoly should exist in their country by making the game the property of the commonwealth, and this principle prevails in most states now. While the game belongs to the commonwealth the land belongs to the individual, and he may prohibit trespass thereon if he chooses. In many places he has been compelled to prohibit hunting for the sake of protecting his property. This because so many hunters were careless or criminal. In some cases organizations of sportsmen and owners of land have come to an understanding which is good for both parties. Land owners are guaranteed against damage and both parties protect and foster game that is useful to both. Some day, by organization on both sides, such an arrangement may become common, to the advantage of all concerned. The careless or marauding hunter, who is no sportsman, is the greatest obstacle to such plans now.

For some years now Ohio has been the sore spot of sportsmen all over the country, due to the law which changed the course of nature and decreed that quail should be no longer the best of the game birds, but should be demoted to the class with mere canaries

and other songsters. I have even recently noticed a tendency in some other states to follow Ohio's example. To them I would like to urge DON'T DO IT. I cannot but believe that the tendency referred to is not so much that these other states think the measure a wise one, but that they naturally feel like following the leadership—in this as in other matters—of one so important as the Buckeye State. A certain sense of obligation, therefore, rests upon Ohio that her example may be one worthy of being followed. Unquestionably this song-bird law should be repealed—for it is not a credit to our statute books. It is merely one more prohibition that does not prohibit. If any reader cares to go deeper into this subject he might get the January 5, 1924, and February 23, 1924, issues of *National Stockman and Farmer* and read my debate with the farmers through the columns of that worthy publication, which has always been so fearless and so fair.

No one imagines for a minute that quail are song birds. The farmers themselves do not think so, nor really want them so classi-

fied. But they have simply put one over on the sportsmen—to get even, and reduce the attractiveness of hunting, because they have suffered so much from hunters in the past. *And not one of us can blame them for that desire. The only pity is that so many of them are not yet ready and willing to forgive and forget.*

Now I have found that the farmer is, on the whole, a pretty good sort—just as people generally are, on the whole, a pretty good sort. Blood is blood and hearts are hearts, whether you find them on the farm or in the forum. You treat the farmer right and he will almost always reciprocate. You be fair to him and he will be fair to you. I have usually found that when I go to a farmer in advance, tell him who I am and what I want, and enter into a little friendly conversation with him, enough so he may know that he may count upon appreciation and fair play in return for his great kindness to me—the almost invariable rule is that he will be glad to grant the privilege.

I think that each real sportsman should take it upon himself as a definite duty in

every way within his power to help protect the farmer from the encroachment of unscrupulous shooters. Accidents will happen. Yet accidents need not happen very often. There is no excuse for it. If a domestic fowl is accidentally killed, or any of the stock is injured, no sportsman is fair even to himself, let alone his brother sportsmen, if he does not immediately go to the man whose property has been lost or damaged and make it good. The fellow who ducks such responsibility is only making it harder for himself, and for others. If such responsibilities had not been ducked in the past, we would to-day be shooting quail in Ohio, take it from me! As a matter of fact, I very much doubt if any hunter who can't tell a cow from a quail is fit to be allowed to roam the fields with loaded firearms.

I will confess that, until I had thought seriously upon these things, I myself did not regard the farmers' attitude in the same sympathetic light as I do at present. To-day I would do anything that lies within my power to protect the farmers' interests, because I know their interests and mine

are identical in the long run. I, personally, am very bitter against the so-called sportsman who is injuring his brother sportsmen's interests, as well as his own, by not helping to protect the interests of the farmers. I have no patience with any such and believe it will be a splendid day when all true sportsmen take up the fight against those of the type that have been instrumental in bringing the farmers and the sportsmen so far apart.

But, happily, I believe there is a great tendency toward a better understanding. The bond of mutuality between the farmer and the huntsman is necessary for the perpetuation of sport. Let all sportsmen so conduct themselves that the farmers do not even desire to resort to such practice as to call quail song birds in order to accomplish their purpose of reducing the number of hunters.

I would like to see sportsmen and their organizations recognized as the chief allies of the farmers. Let sportsmen actively line up and help the farmers in their various problems—political and otherwise, and let

the farmers come to realize that they may unfailingly count upon the coöperation of the sportsmen, whenever their cause is just—and you will go a long way toward bringing these two interests together. For remember this: *We need the farmer. And the farmer needs us.* Let's be the fastest friends in the world and our troubles will never happen. Nothing could be finer, nothing more natural, than a blending and cementing of the friendship between farmers and sportsmen. Then— who knows?—quail may some day even cease to be song birds!

Seriously speaking, quail are *not* song birds. Besides, it is best for quail to be shot into—best for the quail themselves. The reason for this is, that it breaks up the coveys and thus prevents the old cock birds from maintaining undaunted sway and gives the young cocks a chance. This is good for the quail, in that it makes hardier, stronger, bigger, better birds—birds that are healthier and more able to take care of themselves.

This is well, particularly since it must be remembered that hawks, foxes, cats and se-

vere winters kill more quail than all the hunters ever will; and it goes without saying that the harder the quail the better able they will be to take care of themselves. This sort of information should be given the farmers. They don't realize it. You fellows who know the facts should spread the gospel. Get your local newspapers, farm press and other mediums of publicity to publish such information. It is really ridiculous that quail should be called song birds on the theory of protection—when it really works out the other way. Let's get the facts out of the darkness—let's get editors to printing for the people the correct information. Plenty of publicity is what we need more than anything else—so let's go after it and get it. It makes no difference how much we know if no one else knows it. Printer's ink is what we sportsmen need more than anything else. That is what beats us, by being adverse; and that is the weapon we ourselves must use to win our way back to our fundamental rights. Much good can be accomplished if we will give all the facts we can muster to every editor we know. And

another thing—it isn't the sporting publications that can do us the most good. They only reach fellows like ourselves. But it is the newspapers and farm press that we must somehow reach and win. It's a big job—but let's tackle it! If each one of us does his share, we'll accomplish a lot in total. Let's dig up the most authentic possible facts and present them to the greatest possible number of people. That's the way to put over any proposition. The old day of darkness has passed. This is the age of publicity.

Another thing we must impress upon the public is the fact that sportsmen are the best friends any kind of game can have. *For sportsmen realize they must protect to perpetuate!* For selfish reasons, even if no other, the sportsman will do all he can to protect the quail. I am speaking, of course, of sportsmen as a whole—not some wanton, wilfully destructive individuals. These exist in all classes. After all is said and done, the best thing for the quail would be to make them game birds again in Ohio, and for their best protection put them back where they

belong—in the hands of their best friends: *the sportsmen.*

It's bad practice to make laws that any large number of citizens will not respect. We have too many such—and they breed contempt of all law, which is the worst thing that can happen. Give quail back to the sportsmen, and the birds will be better protected than they are to-day. Then if there is a short open season—even if for only five or ten days—it will be observed and respected by the best sportsmen everywhere; and that will be a healthy condition. *It is most decidedly not the case with the law that exists to-day.*

As I write, the following letter has just reached me from a sportsman who lives almost on the boundary line of Ohio and West Virginia. It occurs to me that it merits publication:

Another winter has passed without serious damage to our quail. They are more plentiful to-day in West Virginia, Kentucky and Ohio than for many years. This is not hearsay, but from actual experience. In the state of Old Kentucky, in Carter County, during last November and part of De-

ember, I saw more quail than you would really believe existed in one locality—fine, fully matured birds and large coveys. In the vicinity of Huntington, West Virginia, quail were very plentiful at the close of the last season. Why should there be a perpetual closed season on quail in Ohio? There are more quail in Kentucky than in Ohio, and this in the face of the fact that Kentucky has always had long open seasons with no bag limit until recently.

A short open season, with reasonable bag limit, will never exterminate "Bob White," but rather prolong his existence, because then the true sportsman is ever ready with his cash, time or influence to help legislation as needed, and to replenish depleted covers whenever necessary. Years ago, before the ban was placed upon exporting quail for propagation from one state to another, certain members of the old Wheeling Gun Club, each year about March 1st, purchased dozens of pairs of those big, strong Kansas quail and liberated them in the vicinity of our fall and winter hunting grounds; and even at this late day, those localities where the imported birds were planted, still show signs of the wisdom of mixing 'em up.

The wary grouse is fast disappearing as the ax of the woodsman plays havoc with his natural haunts, but while he is on the way out, more quail are on the way in, as grain fields, old pastures and brushy

thickets furnish them with ample protection, as well as a living. If ever our Northern or Eastern quail become too scarce to permit a short open season, then appeal to legislation and the sportsmen and others of the Southern states will respond to a man and furnish quail from their abundance for replenishing our depleted covers. You have to shoot with the boys of the South before you really know what real sport is; and one must live in their homes before he can fully realize the meaning of true hospitality.

Having hunted and traveled through the Carolinas, Georgia and Florida for years, I know whereof I speak. In conclusion, will say that where there are hundreds of quail in the North and East, there are thousands of quail in the South. You cannot change the leopard's spots, neither can quail be changed to song birds, except in name.

I can merely add, myself, in conclusion, that we have as many quail as there are in Ohio to-day—not because of the present song-bird law—but because of the several recent mild winters. We would to-day have even more than we have—and a great number of coveys of bigger, better birds—if we might have had a short open season with all the benefits for the birds themselves that

such a condition would imply as a result of the coöperation of sportsmen and their organizations.

I have dwelt at such length on this Ohio situation because I believe it affects us all either directly or indirectly, no matter where we live—and, even though I am myself a Buckeye born and bred, this is one example of my native state that I hope no other state will follow.

This chapter had been completed to this point when the *American Field* of March 31, 1923, arrived with its excellent article entitled "Hoodlums and Chinch Bugs." It has such a pointed bearing on this subject, and its viewpoint and presentation are so splendid, that permission to reprint the article was sought immediately. Thanks to the courtesy of the publishers it is reprinted herewith and should have an appeal to farmers everywhere as well as to all real sportsmen.

It is not the chinch bug that is bothering those farmers who want the quail put on the song-bird list.

It is the hoodlums who tramp over their fields without showing proper respect for the owner's rights. Some fanatical bird fanciers tell the farmer that the quail is such a wonderful bug eater that it should be permanently protected against the sportsman's gun. The farmer likes to believe this, for if it is true⁷ then he can get rid of the bugs and the hoodlums by taking away from the shooters the incentive to go on his land for birds.

The farmer can make for himself an asset out of the quail on his farm and get rid of the hoodlums at the same time. But we must first convince him that quail will not multiply by the mere process of protection.

The honest naturalist and almost any sportsman can demonstrate the fact that the number of obnoxious bugs and weeds that the quail eats is a negligible quantity that has no perceptible effect on future crop of either. Quail like good grain food, although they will eat a little weed seed and pick up an occasional bug.

Instead of being deceived about the quail's value as a bug eater, let the farmer rather make of this bird an asset, by paying a little attention to his propagation and protection. Then he will have more birds on his farm to eat bugs and weed seed, and will have something that will bring him a little revenue. He will have a shooting privilege for sale.

It is true that the shooting privilege on a three-hundred-acre tract is not worth a big sum of money, but in these days, when the man of the soil must scratch and dig everywhere in order to make both ends meet, any income from the farm, however small, is worth while looking after.

In some sections of the South, where quail are plentiful, land rents to shooters at about ten cents an acre for the shooting season. As this is very short—about one month in some states—the land owner with a three-hundred-acre tract gets thirty dollars a month for allowing sportsmen to tramp over his ground. In point of fact, the land owner is better off where the shooting privilege is in the hands of some known person than he would be if any one so disposed would hunt on his grounds. Instead of warning off the crowd by putting up trespass signs and chasing people off his grounds who would ignore his signs, this disagreeable job is put on the man who rents the ground. If he wants some one to keep off trespassers during the shooting season he must pay for the service.

Farmers who forbid shooting on their lands do not like to interfere with the neighborhood boys if they happen to hunt on their land, nor do they feel like objecting if these boys bring with them a few harum-scarum chaps from town. When he has rented the ground he can tell his friends with good

grace that he has sold the shooting privilege and is obligated not to give it away to another. That preserves good neighborly feeling and relieves the land owner of a disagreeable job.

Farmers as a rule do not object seriously to well-disposed sportsmen hunting on their land. It is the hoodlum, who leaves gates open, frightens stock and breaks fences, that is the objectionable visitor. And these people are, as a rule, unknown to the farmer. When he is dealing with one man who is disposed to observe the farmer's rules in his own interest there is little danger of any damage being done. If by chance the sportsman renter should do any damage he would feel himself obligated to report and pay for it. In fact, the farmer would be better off to give away the shooting privilege of his farm than he would be to go to the expense and trouble of trying to keep all hunters off.

While the going rental of shooting privileges is small, this does not mean that they will remain at a present fixed price. The shooting privilege may be improved and increased in value. This increased value almost any sportsman would be glad to pay. What the man who is fond of shooting wants is a place where he can go and kill game without being regarded as a trespasser likely to be chased away by an irate land owner. He is willing to pay for a hunting privilege, and the better it is the more he

will pay for it. When the farmer learns how to improve his shooting preserve he will find it to his interest to make such necessary improvements as will insure him an increased revenue.

In Europe the general public does not invade the farmer's lands with dog and gun. The European farmer has learned the way of keeping the crowd off and getting money from some one who is willing to pay for the privilege of shooting on his land. He has also learned that game can be made to multiply, just as it is possible to increase the chicken flock. It was not always so. Prior to 1830 shooting was generally open to all. But at that time the owner of a large moor in Scotland conceived the idea that shooting on this tract of land was worth something, and he rented it.

Game birds like quail thrive and multiply fast under cultivation. It is with them just as it is with cattle or sheep. A given number will do well on a given tract of land. Suitable food, shelter, and water are what determine the number that will thrive. In a state of nature we may expect a given tract of land to support a certain number of quail. With a little artificial assistance this number may be easily doubled. Quail do not need much help, but they respond readily to such little as they need, if it is provided. During the cold winter months, when the ground is covered with snow in our northern states,

quail have to work hard and travel far enough for food to keep them alive. A little assistance at such times saves the lives of many birds and serves to keep them from wandering away from the particular territory which they have come to regard as home. To supply this food is not a very serious task. A little cracked corn, buckwheat, barley and wheat scattered about the thickets they frequent is about all that is necessary, except that it is well to mix a little meat scrap with the ration and to provide a little sand in sheltered places.

If the farmer and his adjoining neighbors living in a section of the country suitable for quail will take a little pains to do the things necessary for his welfare, they will be surprised to learn how quickly these birds can be made to multiply under proper treatment. They will be surprised also to find sportsmen anxious to pay for the privilege of shooting these birds in the open season.

(1)

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